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NICK CARTER STORIES

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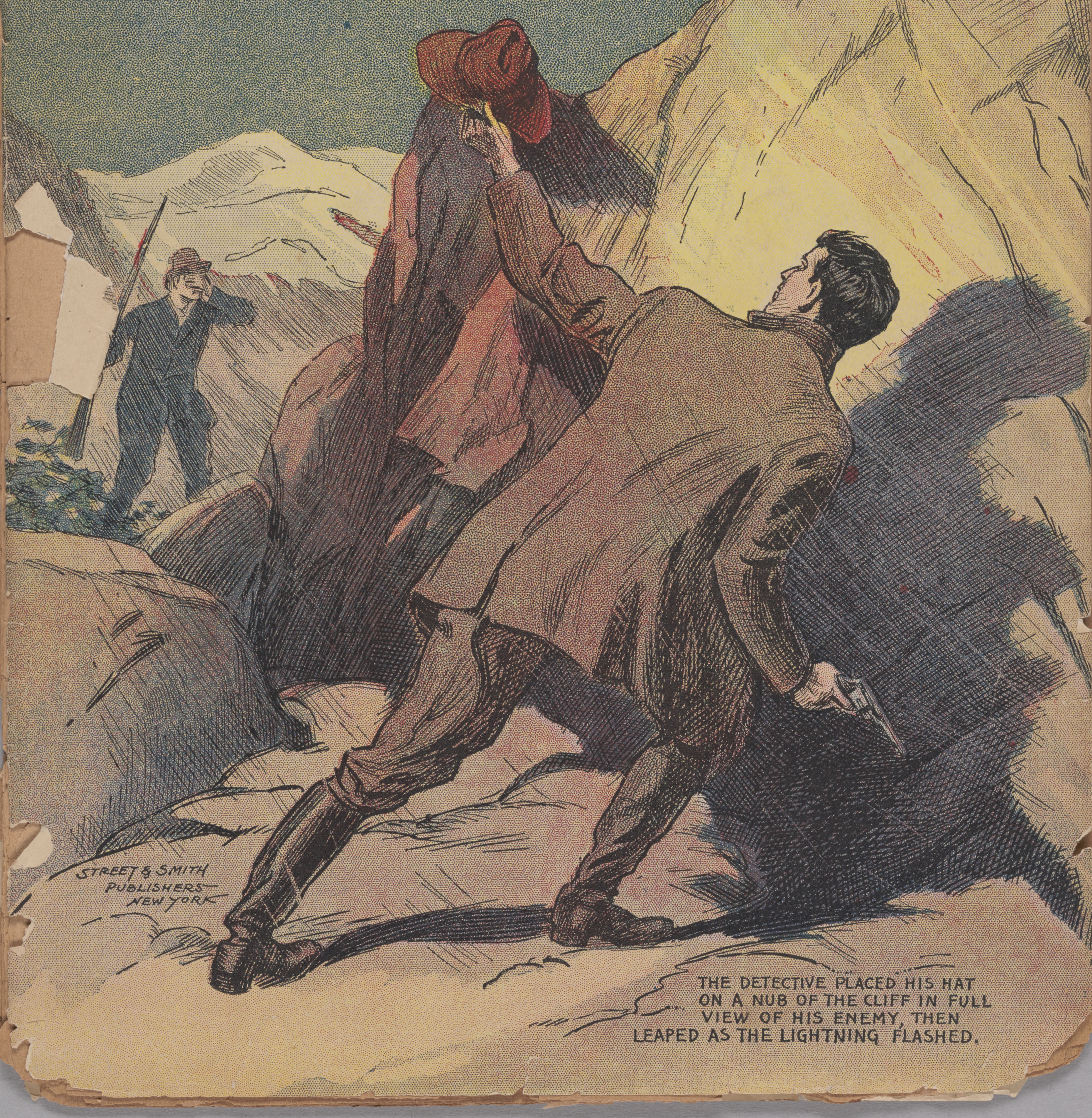
NICK CARTER'S HUNT FOR A TREASURE



THE DETECTIVE PLACED HIS HAT ON A NUB OF THE CLIFF IN FULL VIEW OF HIS ENEMY, THEN LEAPED AS THE LIGHTNING FLASHED.

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NICK CARTER'S HUNT FOR A TREASURE;

Or, A FIGHT FOR LIFE WITH A MYSTERIOUS FOE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEVIL'S EYE.

Nick Carter was in Denver, having just finished an important case, and the newspapers had long accounts of it.

His name was freely mentioned, for, through no fault of his own, it had been known from the beginning that he was at work on the matter.

Therefore, he was not surprised when the card of an entire stranger was brought to him at the hotel where he was staying.

"Philip Delmar," he said aloud, as he glanced at the card. "Ever hear of him, Patsy?"

His young assistant, who had worked with him on the case referred to, replied that he had not.

"Then," said Nick, "I suppose we must get acquainted with him. You may show him up," he said to the bell boy who had brought the card.

The detectives were in a parlor that adjoined their bedrooms, where they had gone after breakfast, because they found it unpleasant in the public rooms on account of the stares of curious persons who crowded around for a glimpse at the famous men.

They could have avoided the crowd by disguising themselves, but Nick did not care to do that.

"We've been working in plain sight," he said; "let's be ourselves until we have to go to work again."

Mr. Philip Delmar came in. He was a medium-sized, middle-aged man, with a very brown face and quick, rather nervous manners.

He began at once:

"I want you to find the Devil's Eye."

"Eh?" said Nick.

"The devil!" exclaimed Patsy, with a smile.

"No, not the devil," corrected Delmar seriously; "the Devil's Eye. It's a diamond."

"Oh!"

"I don't know why it wasn't called the Angel's Eye, or something like that," added Delmar. "It's beautiful enough to have a prettier name, but Devil's Eye it is. I've lost it. I've been robbed of it. That diamond, Mr. Carter, is worth a fabulous sum. I'll pay you a bigger fee than you ever received if you will recover it for me."

"We'll talk about the fee later," responded Nick. "Let's hear your story. Lost treasure is always interesting."

Delmar took the chair to which Nick pointed.

"This young man is your assistant, I suppose," he remarked, with a glance at Patsy.

"Yes. I want him to hear what you say."

"Quite right. I read about him. Well, Mr. Carter, I don't suppose you care to hear the history of the diamond before it came into my possession."

"Not unless it is necessary, but you might explain where you got it, and how long ago that was."

"Certainly. I've had it about a year. I was a merchant in Calcutta. One day I happened to save a man's life. He was attacked by thugs, and I went to his rescue. I don't think you will care to hear about that, for your own life is so full of adventure that a little racket such as I had could hardly interest you."

"I'm not so sure," said Nick, smiling. "I like a good story."

"Tell it!" exclaimed Patsy.

"Really, gentlemen, I don't believe I know how. You see, I was the hero of the affair, and I don't look on myself as any sort of a hero. Besides, a good American revolver, in a steady hand, is better than half the heroism you read about."

"It isn't every hand that can hold a revolver steadily," suggested Nick.

"True, but mine was steady on that occasion. The Brahmin—I forgot to say that the victim of the thugs was a Brahmin, immensely rich, and of very high rank—the Brahmin was set on by as many as a dozen, I guess. I didn't stop to count.

"It was just about sundown, and I was on my way home from the store. The place where the attack occurred was in a quiet street, far from the business center of the city.

"Nobody was around except myself. The Brahmin was a stranger to me, but I went to his help on general principles.

"I didn't do much fighting—just emptied my revolver right and left. Every shot brought down a thug. Couldn't help it, you know, they were so near.

"Five of 'em died on the spot. One lived till he got to a hospital. The rest ran away."

Nick smiled at the man's careless way of telling about the adventure, and liked him for it.

So many men would have made a long and bloodcurdling yarn of the adventure.

"Well," said Nick, "I don't think I want any trouble with you if you still carry that revolver."

"I do!" snapped Delmar, hitching around in his chair nervously, "and if I had had the nerve to use it a little while ago, I don't believe I should have to be here now with my tale of woe.

"But," he added, more quietly, "if I had used it then I should probably be locked up for murder, so, perhaps, it is just as well.

"To go back to Calcutta, the Brahmin called on me next day at the store. Said he wanted to make me a present to show how grateful he was.

"I responded politely, at least I hope I did, but the upshot of the conversation was that he gave me a little parcel which he said had something in it known over a good part of India as the Devil's Eye.

"'It is of great value,' said he, 'but it will be more useful to you out of India than in it, for here the man who owns the stone is always in danger of attack; for the stone is known to all tribes, and there have been bloody wars about it.'

"With that he went away and left the parcel in my hands.

"I looked at it, and found a white diamond of considerable size, but uncut. I called it a white diamond; you know what I mean—colorless. Cutting would make it wonderful. There's no doubt about that.

"I didn't know what to do with the thing. It seemed almost like owning a white elephant, but, after I had asked Calcutta jewelers about its value, I decided that business life in India was not to my taste.

"I sold out and came home, that is, to America, with the idea that I would have the diamond cut, sell it, and have a good easy time the rest of my life."

"Do you live in this part of the country?" asked Nick, as Delmar paused.

"No; I can't say I live anywhere yet, as I've been back less than a month, but I came from Boston. I spent some years in the mines around here before going to India. Most of my friends, therefore, are in these parts, and that's where the trouble comes in. I didn't feel like crossing the country without stopping to see some of the boys and telling them of my good fortune.

"Hearing that a couple of them were in Denver, I dropped off here and looked them up.

"That was about a week ago.

"I had my friends to dinner with me at this hotel.

"Of course, we had a private room. It was this one we are now in, Mr. Carter.

"Here, gentlemen, in this very room, I lost the Devil's Eye."

"That makes it all the more interesting to us," said Nick. "I suppose you showed your treasure to your friends."

"I did."

"Describe the situation and scene exactly."

"The table was at the side of the room where your assistant is sitting. The waiters at first had put it in the middle, but I objected to that, because I fancied people might be looking in at the windows, and I didn't care to have the stone seen by everybody.

"Another reason for the change was the fact that just beside your assistant there are two buttons in the wall."

Patsy knew that the buttons were there, but he turned and looked at them.

"One," continued Delmar, "is the signal to the office. The other turns on the electric light. I had the office signal connected with another room near by, where the waiters stayed, and when we wanted them we could have them here without a long wait.

"That was the real reason I had the table at one side. The fact isn't of much importance, but you want all the details.

"Four of us sat down."

"Four?" interrupted Nick. "You mentioned only two friends."

"There was a fourth. He was a blind man named John Crabbe, a very clever fellow, who had become a partner of one of my friends. I had been introduced to him by my friend, and naturally asked him to join us, and he did so."

"You haven't named your other friends."

"I was coming to that. I sat next the wall, so that I could push the button when we wanted anything.

"Across the table from me was Crabbe.

"Matthews was at my right, and Donnelson at my left.

"There was nothing at all peculiar in the way the table was spread."

"Give me your friends' first names," said Nick.

"Frank Matthews and George Donnelson."

"George Donnelson," repeated Nick, with a glance at Patsy. "What was his business?"

"Oh, he is a promoter. He told me he was going in for oil just now."

"I thought so. I'm glad to hear it."

"Why!" exclaimed Delmar, "do you know Donnelson?"

"No," replied Nick, "but I want to very much. Never mind why at present. Go on with your dinner."

The fact was that in Nick's previous case, which had included more than one crime, there had been a man whom the detectives had not seen.

They knew of him as the partner of a swindling prospector. Whether he had been guilty of anything more than sharp dealing they did not know, but they would have liked to lay their hands on him and find out.

This man's name was George Donnelson, and so far as they could learn, he had not been in Denver for nearly a week before the detectives arrived.

Delmar looked curiously at Nick a moment, and then went on.

"I don't need to describe the dinner. It passed off just as such things do. We had all we wanted to eat and drink, and when coffee and cigars had been brought on I showed my diamond.

"It had been in my pocket all the time. I had no hesitation in handing it to the men and letting them pass it from one to the other.

"You can imagine that they were interested. Even Crabbe, who could not see it, took it in his hand and felt of it.

"It was he, who, after feeling it for some time, put it on the table and pushed it in front of my place.

"I remember every detail," cried Delmar, growing a little excited; "how Crabbe, in pushing the stone along the cloth, bumped it against a dish, and then steered it closer to me.

"I remember the sigh with which he took his hand away from it.

"For a time it lay on the table in plain sight, and questions were fired at me.

"I told them all I knew about the stone, how I got it and what I meant to do with it, just as any man would in talking with old friends.

"By and by, the glasses being empty, I reached behind my back to push the button for a waiter, and meant to ask him to bring brandy.

"I didn't look at what I was doing, and the reason was that I didn't want to take my eyes off the Devil's Eye.

"Mind you, gentlemen, I didn't distrust my friends.

"I simply felt better when I could see the stone.

"As luck would have it, I touched the wrong button, and the room was instantly in total darkness.

"It was only an instant, I assure you, for I turned on the light again in a hurry.

"I shall never forget just what I saw as the lights again flashed.

"Most important was what I didn't see, and that was the Devil's Eye.

"The diamond wasn't there."

Delmar paused, and Nick said:

"If this hadn't happened a week ago, and if you were not telling of it now, I should say that the explanation was a very simple one."

"Ah!" responded Delmar, "and what would your explanation be?"

"That one of your so-called friends took it."

"Exactly; and that is what I believe was done."

"Then," said Nick, "as you didn't prove that on the spot, there must be a mystery."

"Yes, but why do you put it that way?"

"Why, a man who can handle a gun as you can should have been able to recover the stone then and there. It didn't float away in the air."

"I told you," said Delmar gloomily, "that I wished I had used my gun. I did use it in a way, as I will tell you; but I don't know about that floating away in the air. I can't see what else became of it."

"You said you couldn't forget what you saw. Let's have every detail."

"Certainly. I looked first at Matthews. He had his hand at his lips, just removing his cigar from his mouth, and he was puffing out a lot of smoke.

"There was a look of surprise in his face, but nothing more than would be caused by the sudden darkness.

"His other hand rested on the table.

"Donnelson looked queer. At the first flash I suspected him. I can see his face now, but it's hard to describe. It was full of amazement, and he was looking straight at the spot where the stone had been lying. One hand was clutching the cloth so that it was wrinkled under his fingers; the other was fooling with an empty wineglass.

"He was leaning rather away from the table, partly tilted back in his chair.

"Crabbe, the blind man, was just lifting a goblet of water to his lips. He smoked like the rest of us, but he drank nothing but water.

"I remember how his sightless eyes were looking straight ahead, how some ashes dropped from the end of his cigar on the cloth, how he took a sip of water and set the handsome cut-glass goblet down.

"My God! it is all so clear! I even remember how the water in his goblet danced a little as he set the goblet on the table!"

"Your description is very clear," said Nick. "What about Donnelson? You say he was tilted back in his chair."

"Yes, and such a look——"

"As if the sudden darkness showed him a possible opportunity to steal the stone, and that he had been tempted?"

"That's it exactly, Mr. Carter! He looked just that way—startled, you know."

"Well, was he tilted back in his chair when you turned the lights off?"

"I believe he was."

The detective thought a moment.

"I seem to see the scene as well as you do," he remarked, "and Donnelson must have seen that the stone was gone as soon as you did. Is that so?"

"My belief is that he knew it was gone?" cried Delmar hotly.

"Be calm, Mr. Delmar," cautioned Nick. "You have been making out a fine case so far. Don't spoil it by getting excited. Let's stick to facts, what you know to be facts."

"All right, what shall I tell you next?"

"What was said and what you did."

CHAPTER II.

MAKING HIS FRIENDS UNDRESS.

"Well," said Delmar, "I looked straight at Donnelson.

"His face paled.

"He knew I suspected him.

"'Don't look at me in that way, Phil,' said he.

"'I don't like to,' said I, and my voice was hoarse, 'but I can't enjoy this sort of a joke.'

"Then I looked from Donnelson to Matthews.

"'Come boys,' said I, 'a joke of this kind is too serious. It isn't pleasant. Put the stone back, whichever of you has it.'

"At that Crabbe spoke up.

"'Why, what's up?' he asked.

"I explained to him that the light had been put out accidentally, and that during the darkness the Devil's Eye had been taken by one of my friends.

"You see, gentlemen, light or darkness was all the same to him. He hadn't known of the lights going out till I told him.

"All three of them spoke at once.

"I could hear Donnelson and Matthews saying, 'I haven't got it, Phil,' and Crabbe was saying something about not wondering that I disliked that kind of joke. Just what his words were I couldn't be sure, but that was the sense of it.

"Perhaps you can imagine how I felt.

"That diamond hadn't gone up in smoke.

"There were only us four in the room.

"One of them had robbed me.

"Never mind how sick I felt, not only at the loss of the stone, but at the thought that old friends had done me a dirty trick.

"Let me get on with what I did.

"I stood up and put my hands on the edge of the table.

"The others sat perfectly still, looking at me, except Crabbe, of course, who stared ahead and seemed to be embarrassed.

"'Boys,' said I, 'I don't want to lose old friends, but if that stone isn't put on the cloth in ten seconds, I shall count you my enemies and treat you accordingly.'

"Not one of them stirred.

"I took out my watch and laid it face up on the table.

"Ten seconds isn't a long time, but it seemed a full minute as I stood there, waiting.

"Just as the time was up, Matthews chucked his cigar into a cup and folded his arms, looking very black.

"'I agree with you, Phil,' said he; ''tis a low-down joke to play, and I hope you'll believe me that I'm not in it.'

"Donnelson added quickly: 'I'm not in it, Phil.'

"'Then——' I began, when Crabbe interrupted me.

"He spoke in a trembling voice, and his face was pale.

"'Mr. Delmar and I are not old friends,' said he, 'and if that diamond has disappeared as he says, it would be natural that he should suspect me.'

"'Nonsense!' cried Matthews; 'how could you take it? You couldn't see it.'

"'I didn't take it,' responded Crabbe, 'but hear me out. I should be the one to fall under suspicion. I say to Mr. Delmar, search me.'

"He stood up and felt his way around the table to where I stood.

"I looked at the others, and by that time the last feeling of friendship I had was gone.

"Looking at Donnelson, I said:

"'I have no idea that this blind gentleman has the stone, but if you fellows have got so low that you will sit by and see him insulted, I'll take him at his word.'

"Donnelson started to get up.

"He looked savage, I can tell you!

"'You're accusing me,' he began.

"'Sit down!' I commanded, and with that I pulled my gun on him.

"'This is the gun that did the trick with thugs in Calcutta,' said I. 'It's still in business. Make a move and you're a dead man!'

"Donnelson sank back into his chair, put his hands into his pocket and chewed at his cigar without a word.

"It proved that neither he nor Matthews had a gun.

"The only man there besides myself who was armed was the blind man, Crabbe."

"What sort of weapon did he carry?" asked Nick.

"A revolver, and a mighty good one."

"So!" said Nick.

"Odd, wasn't it? He explained that he felt the need of protection, and hoped that if he ever got into a tight place the sight of the weapon would scare his enemies.

"'For, of course,' he said sadly, 'I couldn't fire the thing with any skill. I might hit a man by accident, but as that man might be my best friend, I never carry the gun loaded.'

"He said this as he laid the weapon on the table, and told me to go through him.

"'I insist on it,' he added.

"Well, gentlemen, I searched him.

"My gun lay where I could snatch it up in an instant, but there was no need to do so.

"Donnelson and Matthews sat like statues while I emptied Crabbe's pockets, felt of his coat lining, and, in short, rummaged him over as thoroughly as any police detective could have done.

"I didn't find the diamond.

"At last I gave him back the things I had taken from his pockets, and he felt his way back to his place across the table from me.

"Then I turned to Donnelson.

"'You next,' said I.

"He stood up, and his face was white to the lips.

"'I'll not stand it,' said he. 'I haven't got your confounded stone, and I won't be searched.'

"I began to raise my gun.

"He caught up a water bottle from the table and drew back to hurl it at me.

"I was too quick for him.

"I'm a pretty good shot, anyway, and the range was short.

"The bullet struck the water bottle just below his fingers, smashing the neck and causing the rest of it to crash to the floor.

"That was what I meant to do, of course, for I could have killed him easily.

"He didn't bring his hand down.

"With the neck of the bottle grasped in his fingers, he stood glaring at me.

"Frightened? You bet!

"I got just a glance at Matthews, who had started from his chair at the shot.

"Crabbe was relighting his cigar.

"'Frank,' said I to Matthews, 'sit still,' and he obeyed.

"Meantime, I had not lowered the gun that was pointed straight at Donnelson.

"'George,' I said, 'you're going to be searched. You're going to take off each stitch you've got on, and you're going to do it without any talk about it. I can't and won't stand any argument.'

"His eyes were defiant, and perhaps he would have tried argument, but just then there was a knock at the door.

"'What's the matter in here?' a voice demanded.

"'Nothing,' I answered quietly; 'my revolver went off accidentally. No harm's done.'

"'That kind of accident is rather alarming to other people in the house,' said the voice, and the man, whoever it was, went away.

"I added in a lower tone:

"'The next time this gun goes off, accidentally or otherwise, there will be a dead man in this room.'

"I kept my eyes on Donnelson.

"He knew I meant business, and he began to strip.

"Well, gentlemen, to make the story short, Donnelson took off all his clothes.

"I made him turn the pockets inside out and pass the garments to me.

"I felt them over, found nothing, and ordered him to stand back at the other side of the room.

"When he began to object I simply raised the gun.

"I suppose I looked like a madman, for he slunk back then without another word.

"'They say the third time never fails,' said I, turning to Matthews.

"He didn't like the idea any better than Donnelson had, but he seemed to realize that the easiest way out of it was the quickest, for he went to the middle of the room, as I ordered, and stripped.

"His clothes were as empty as Donnelson's, so far as the Devil's Eye was concerned.

"I was astounded.

"For an instant my head swam, and if those fellows had known it they could have knocked me over with their little fingers.

"Fortunately, I did not show the sudden weakness I felt, and probably they were too much frightened on their own account to notice anything.

"But Donnelson began to speak, and with the sound of his voice I got my nerve all back again.

"He said:

"'I want you to get your fill of this outrage, and so suggest to you that there's still one guest of yours whom you haven't insulted by making him undress.'

"The words were no sooner out of his mouth than Crabbe got up from the table.

"He had been smoking like a furnace while all this had been going on.

"Now he laid down his cigar—I remember so clearly his hesitating motions as he felt for a plate to put it on, but there was no hesitation in his speech.

"'I understand,' he said. 'It will be easier for me than for the others, for I cannot see my own shame.'

"With that he began to unbutton his clothes.

"For one instant I was on the point of telling him to never mind. I hated to disgrace him.

"But the thought of that diamond was too much, and I told him harshly to go ahead.

"In another minute, then, I had three naked men before me.

"The search had been fruitless.

"Of course, I hadn't hoped to find it on Crabbe, but when I realized that I had taken the last possible step toward the recovery of the treasure, I was again awfully weak.

"Again it was Donnelson's voice that roused me.

"He spoke with bitter sarcasm.

"'Now that you've insulted us as much as possible,' said he, 'suppose you look under the table.'

"As God lives, I had not thought of that!

"My heart fairly leaped with hope.

"An apology to them was almost on my lips as I pushed the table along a little so as to see the floor under where it had been.

"It flashed across me that, in turning to touch the button, I might have accidentally brushed off the Devil's Eye.

"One glance at the floor was really enough.

"There was nothing there, but I looked and looked.

"Acting like the madman I felt, I tumbled their clothes over again and again to see if the stone had been concealed under the garments by sleight of hand.

"To be brief, gentlemen, all was in vain.

"I did not find a trace of the diamond then, and I have not found a trace of it since."

Delmar wiped his face and sunk his head on his hands.

The story had excited him, and as he told how he had forced the three men to do his bidding the sweat rolled down his cheeks, and his brown face paled.

Nick and Patsy were not only intensely interested, they were as puzzled as was Delmar himself.

"That was a strange situation," said Nick, in a low tone; "I should like to know how it ended."

Delmar looked up and spoke wearily.

"I was overcome at last with the uselessness of further search, and returned to my place at the table.

"'Put on your clothes,' said I.

"At that moment I didn't care what happened, but the sullen gleam in Donnelson's eyes as he went to his clothes, that were scattered over that side of the room, made me watchful.

"I saw the possibility that he and Matthews might spring on me to get even for having treated them in that way.

"So I did not sit down, but leaned both hands on the table, my revolver being under one of them, and waited.

"Not once did I take my eyes off them while they were dressing.

"They said nothing, and I could understand that, for if they were innocent, as they seemed to be, they would be too mad for words, and if they were guilty, they would know that the less said the better.

"Before they had finished dressing, a crafty thought came to me.

"I had to believe that they had got possession of the stone by some hocus-pocus, for there was no other explanation for its disappearance.

"I thought then that it would be better to keep friends with them so as to spy on them.

"'Boys,' I began, 'I'm sorry for this. I hope you'll excuse me, and take into account what I am losing. I am sorry I suspected you, and——'

"Donnelson interrupted angrily.

"'Don't apologize to me,' said he. 'You couldn't make up for what you've done if you were to beg pardon for a hundred years. You and I are done, Phil Delmar. If we meet some time when I have a gun with me, look out.'

"I turned to Matthews to see if he took it in the same way.

"Matthews was very pale and quiet.

"'I make no threats,' said he.

"That was all.

"I understood him.

"He would never pardon me, and, as between him and Donnelson, he would be the more dangerous one to meet on a dark night.

"I couldn't very well say anything to the blind man, somehow.

"So I stood silent until they were ready to go.

"'May I go now?' asked Donnelson, with a sneer.

"I jerked my head toward the door.

"He went out muttering that I had not heard the last of it.

"Matthews kept his mouth shut, and he waited to lead Crabbe, who naturally was a little slow in getting his clothes on.

"He was not much behind the others, though, and when he was ready he came slowly to the table.

"Matthews stepped to his side to help, but Crabbe pushed him away.

"'One minute, Frank,' he said.

"Then he spoke to me.

"'This has been very humiliating, Mr. Delmar,' he said, fixing his sightless eyes on me, 'but, believe me, I can understand how you feel. I am very sorry, and for myself I hope you won't think any the worse of me.'

"I felt awfully ashamed of the way I had treated him.

"'Mr. Crabbe,' I replied, 'I am as sorry as you are. I wouldn't have troubled you if it hadn't been for Donnelson.'

"'I believe you,' said he simply. 'So far as I have any ill feeling in the matter I charge it up to him.'

"That made it clear that he believed that Donnelson had the stone, and had somehow concealed it from me.

"I reached across the table and shook Crabbe by the hand.

"'Good night, sir,' said I.

"'Good night,' he responded. 'All this has made me very thirsty. May I ask you for a glass of water?'

"I didn't wonder at his thirst. My own throat was burning up.

"'The water bottle is smashed,' said I. 'Won't you have a drop of wine, or liquor?'

"'Thank you, no,' he replied; 'there is water in the goblet I had, I think.'

"I took up his goblet and handed it to him.

"I tell you everything, Mr. Carter, partly because it is all so clear to me that I can't help it, and partly because I suppose you want nothing, no matter how slight, omitted.

"Crabbe thanked me as he took the goblet, drank all the water there was in it, and carefully set the glass down.

"Then he bowed gravely, gave his arm to Matthews, and they left the room.

"I sank into my chair then, utterly despairing, but I was on my feet again in a second.

"I could not give up the conviction that those men somehow had the stone.

"It was Donnelson I suspected directly, of course, but I thought, as I had many times during the search, how they might have conspired together, and have rigged up some devilish trick to do me out of it.

"'In that case,' I thought, 'they will betray themselves once they are out of my sight.'

"I slipped cautiously into the corridor.

"Matthews and Crabbe were halfway down the stairs.

"I followed them.

"Neither spoke until they were at the hotel door.

"Matthews then said:

"There's a cab here, John. I'll put you in it and have the driver take you home. I don't feel ready to go just yet.'

"'Very well,' the blind man answered, 'but don't let this unfortunate affair lead you to anything violent.'

"Matthews replied with a whispered curse.

"I got down close by the door.

"Crabbe was put into the carriage, and I heard Matthews tell the driver where to go.

"When the cab rolled away, Matthews turned partly about, and I saw that Donnelson was waiting for him.

"For several seconds the two men stood looking at each other in silence.

"Then—Mr. Carter, as I live, I cannot understand what followed, but perhaps you can.

"Both men spoke at once and they said the same thing.

"'Have you got that stone, George?' asked Matthews, and 'Have you got that stone, Frank?' said Donnelson.

"They didn't smile when they perceived that each had asked the same question, and Donnelson, the quicker of the two, was the first to speak next.

"'I didn't take it,' said he.

"'Nor I,' responded Matthews.

"'Then, what the devil became of it? Of course, Crabbe didn't take it. He couldn't.'

"'Oh! that's out of the question,' said Matthews. I suppose Phil has gone mad about it. Probably he put it in his own pocket, and will find it there when he comes to himself.'

"'By George!' exclaimed Donnelson, in a low voice, 'I wish I could think so!'

"'Why?' asked Matthews.

"'Because, after what's happened, I'm darned if I wouldn't be tempted to get it away from him.'

"'Well!' said Matthews, 'I must say I feel the same way. Let's go somewhere and have a drink.'

"With that they walked away, arm in arm."

CHAPTER III.

THE BLIND MAN'S JOURNEY.

Again Delmar paused, as if he had told all he could.

"Did you say that this occurred a week ago?" questioned Nick.

"Yes."

"Well, you haven't been idle in that time."

"No, not altogether."

"What have you done?"

"In the first place, I became as crazy as Matthews said I was. That suggestion of his that I had put the Devil's Eye in my own pocket struck me as being the explanation.

"I dashed up here, went through all my pockets and found nothing.

"As I searched I became frantic, and seemed to feel that I was as guilty as I had thought they were.

"I stripped off all my own clothes, felt of the linings, tore open my vest—oh! I am ashamed to say how madly I acted.

"It was all for nothing, of course.

"At last I was brought to myself by hearing the waiters knocking at the door.

"They wanted to come in to clear up.

"I dressed, let them in, and hung around while they cleared the things away.

"I kept hoping that somehow they would find the diamond.

"When they got through, I went out and walked the streets for hours.

"It was early, you understand, when this trouble happened, not later than eight o'clock, when the men left me, and it was not more than nine when I began my walk.

"Once I stopped when I found myself in front of police headquarters, but I thought that it would be absurd to put the matter into the hands of detectives.

"What could a detective do more than I had done?

"There was no evidence that the diamond had been stolen, nothing except that it had disappeared, and the disappearance was not evidence against any of my guests.

"I was discouraged, and turned away from headquarters hopeless.

"I tried to tell myself that I was not ruined. I had plenty of money to start again in business, but the loss of half a million in one evening, Mr. Carter, would unsettle most men, I guess."

"That's a big amount of money," said Nick. "Do you mean to say that that is what the Devil's Eye is worth?"

"That is what the Calcutta jewelers said I ought to get for it after cutting."

"Well, that's a treasure worth hunting for!"

"Then you will try for it?" asked Delmar eagerly.

"I think so. But you haven't told all that you did. You may have found a clew."

"Yes, I may have. You can judge better than I.

"After leaving police headquarters I didn't go near there again, but kept wandering around.

"A few minutes before eleven o'clock I was in front of the railway station just as a cab arrived with a passenger.

"The driver got down to help the passenger out, and I saw that it was John Crabbe."

"Ah!" exclaimed Nick, and Patsy looked up quickly.

Delmar smiled in a sickly way.

"You think he was skipping with the Devil's Eye?" he said. "Well, perhaps he was. If so, it was another case where I might have used my gun and didn't. Listen!

"I saw the cabman take Crabbe's grip from the seat and then lead him by the arm into the waiting room.

"I followed.

"Crabbe was led to the ticket window, where he bought a ticket for Pueblo.

"I stood close behind him and heard what passed between him and the ticket agent.

"There were some questions and answers about trains. One was due to leave for Pueblo in ten minutes.

"Meantime the cabman stood by to help him to the train.

"As they were about to start, I spoke.

"'Good evening again, Mr. Crabbe,' said I.

"He was looking almost straight at me, I mean his sightless eyes were in my direction.

"His face seemed to cloud a little, and he said, hesitating:

"'Your voice is somewhat familiar. Am I right in thinking that it is Mr. Delmar?'

"I told him he was.

"'Tell me,' he went on eagerly, 'did you find the Devil's Eye, or get any trace?'

"'No,' I answered.

"He looked disappointed.

"'I am distressed,' he said. 'It must be a terrible thing for you.'

"I said I supposed I should have to stand it. Then, 'You're going away?' said I.

"'Yes,' he responded; 'I got home, to find this telegram waiting for me. I am taking the first train possible.'

"He handed me the telegram, and under the circumstances I felt justified in reading it without apology.

"It was dated from Pueblo.

"'Your sister is dying,' it read; 'come quickly,' and it was signed, 'J. M. Gordon, M. D.'

"I told him I was sorry he had had bad news.

"'I have been expecting it for some time,' said he. Then he added earnestly: 'Mr. Delmar, I shall want to know it when you find or get trace of your diamond. You can understand, I suppose, that I am very much interested.'

"'That's natural,' I told him.

"'I shall be back in town after this sad event,' he went on, 'and you will know where to find or address me here, but, meantime, if anything happens, I should like to know about it. Will you send me word?'

"Yes, I told him I would.

"'Then,' said he, 'please take down my Pueblo address. It is my sister's home. If you should find the diamond, or if you should get evidence of what you suspect, I wish you would wire me. I can never feel the same toward Donnelson until this painful matter is cleared up.'

"I had half a mind to tell him what I had heard Donnelson and Matthews say as they were leaving the hotel, but I kept silence on that point and wrote down the address he gave me.

"'I am afraid I shall have to go to my train now,' he said.

"So I shook hands with him, and the cabman led him away.

"As I was going back to the hotel, I made up my mind that I would keep my eyes on Donnelson and Matthews.

"What was to be gained by it was more than I could say, but I could not get rid of the belief that they had tricked me.

"On the way I met them—that is, not to speak to them, for I avoided that.

"They were coming from a club to which they belonged, and were walking rapidly.

"I followed them to Crabbe's lodging house.

"Donnelson, it seemed, lived there also, for he unlocked the door, and both went in.

"They were gone less than five minutes.

"Meantime I had seen a light appear in two or three rooms, and I easily got the idea that they were looking for the blind man.

"When they came out, Matthews was saying:

"'The last train went to Pueblo about a quarter of an hour ago.'

"'Yes,' Donnelson replied.

"That was all I heard them say, but it was enough to show that they were thinking of Crabbe, whether with reference to the diamond you can guess better than I.

"They went to another house, where, as I learned later, a partner of Donnelson lived, whose name was Claymore. I gave no attention to him, as he did not come my way, and I could not see that he had anything to do with the Devil's Eye."

"We know all about Claymore," said Nick; "we have him locked up now, and it was through him that we became suspicious that George Donnelson was crooked. But go on."

"I waited outside Claymore's house for an hour.

"Then Matthews and Donnelson came out together, separated at the corner, and both, I suppose, went home.

"I know that Donnelson did, for I followed him.

"Next day I spotted Donnelson, but did not see Matthews at all. In fact, I have not seen Matthews since.

"Donnelson was most of the time in the office of the oil company in which he and Claymore were interested.

"Late in the day I saw that he received a telegram which seemed to interest him a good deal, but where it was from, or what it was about, I could not learn.

"Well, gentlemen, I am not a good detective.

"Next day I did not see Donnelson at all, and on the next, by some straightforward questions, I heard that he had gone to Pueblo. I took the next train for Pueblo myself."

"And what did you find there?" asked Nick.

"Nothing, worse than nothing!" answered Delmar. "I went first to the address that Crabbe had given me.

"The street he mentioned was there right enough, but the number was a big vacant lot, not a house in a hundred rods.

"Thinking I might have mistaken the number, I inquired for his sister, but nobody knew of such a woman.

"I tried to find Doctor J. M. Gordon, but there was no physician of that name in Pueblo, and the oldest resident never heard of any.

"I went so far as to ask if a blind man had left the train on which Crabbe started with a ticket for Pueblo.

"Nobody among the night force at the railroad station could remember such a man.

"In short, I lost two whole days going to Pueblo and getting back here.

"My mind was then made up to go to headquarters with the matter, when I read about your presence here.

"So I have come to you, and that I am sure is all I can tell you about the matter."

"It is enough," responded Nick. "You have told such a clear story that I do not need to ask questions. We will look for the Devil's Eye, Mr. Delmar."

"Thank you. I presume you will do some traveling?"

"Yes."

"Do you want me with you?"

"No. Leave me your address. If you change it, fix things so that letters or telegrams will be forwarded."

The detective and his client had a few words about the business side of the matter, and then Delmar went away.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DETECTIVE ON THE TRAIL.

"What do you think of it, Patsy?" asked Nick, when they were alone.

"It's a rattling good story," answered the young man. "Do you believe it?"

"Yes, I believe it."

"But how the mischief did they get the diamond?"

Nick laughed.

"I see you think they stole it," he said.

"Well, if there was a diamond, and if it did disappear, what other explanation is there?"

"None, except that I wouldn't say 'they.'"

"What would you say, then?"

"That Crabbe stole it."

"But how?"

"Crabbe," said Nick, not minding the question, "took the Devil's Eye. I doubt if he had any idea of taking it when he came here to dinner.

"I don't believe there was a conspiracy, and I think both Donnelson and Matthews are wholly innocent.

"But when those two talked it over I believe they came to the conclusion that the blind man had the stone.

"Then, being angry with Delmar for making them undress, and so forth, and being dishonest, anyway, I believe they set out to get hold of Crabbe and make him give up the diamond to them, or share it with them."

"That's a pretty theory," remarked Patsy. "It hangs together all right enough. I can see myself that their conversation outside the hotel seems to let them out of it.

"Then they followed Crabbe to his house. Next day Matthews went to Pueblo and found that Crabbe's going there was a bluff, just as Delmar found.

"Matthews probably sent that telegram. Then Donnelson went south and joined Matthews in the hunt for the blind man."

"That's the way I reason it, Patsy," said Nick.

"Well, but," persisted the young man, "how the mischief did Crabbe get that stone?"

Then suddenly Patsy added:

"I'll bet he isn't blind at all!"

"What difference does that make?" asked Nick.

Patsy thought a moment.

"None at all," he answered. "But do you think he is blind?"

"I see no reason to think anything else."

There was a moment of silence. Then Patsy smiled.

"That was a great search Delmar made," he said.

"Yes, indeed."

"Three naked men in a row. Ha! They must have been mad enough to kill!"

"I should suppose so."

"But, say, Nick! You've been thinking and saying yes and no long enough. Tell a fellow: how did Crabbe get and conceal that diamond?"

To the young man's great surprise, Nick smiled, and answered:

"I don't know."

"You're stumped, eh?"

"Completely. That is, at present. I've got to think further, and I'll do so, and hard, too, while I'm traveling. Get a time-table of the trains for Pueblo, Patsy."

The young man went down to the office, and brought up several time-tables, which the detectives studied together for a while, and at last Nick said he was ready.

"One will be enough on this chase," he added, "and I shall want you to stay in Denver, anyway, to send me word if any one or all of these men turn up here.

"They may do so before I get on their track. Keep your eyes open, Patsy."

"You bet, Nick!"

There will be no need to follow the great detective closely over the first part of his search.

It was not very difficult for a man as shrewd as Nick Carter to trace the journey of a blind man.

By looking up the conductor of the night train for Pueblo and asking a few questions he learned that a blind man, on the night he named, had given up a ticket for Pueblo, and then paid his fare to a point a long distance beyond.

That point was the first step he took in his long chase.

Other steps followed in much the same way, and he had the satisfaction more than once of learning that two men had asked similar questions about the blind traveler some days before.

That showed that Donnelson and Matthews had got together and were tracing Crabbe also.

Every detail in Nick's theory, therefore, seemed to be justified, but he was as much in the dark as ever as to that puzzling question: How was the diamond taken and concealed during the thorough search that Delmar made for it?

The one thing Nick held to was the belief that Crabbe, the blind man, had it.

At last he had traced the blind man away from railroads.

Crabbe evidently had hired a horse at a village in northern Arizona and journeyed with a guide for some days.

Nick came across that guide.

"At the end of the fifth day," said the guide to the detective, "he told me to go back. It was in a lonely part of the country, and I didn't feel like leaving him alone, but when he swore that he'd kill me in my sleep if I didn't go back with both horses, I made up my mind that he was too bloodthirsty a blind man for me. So I left him."

This information set Nick to thinking harder than ever.

"Do you think he was really blind?" he asked.

"Oh, sure! Couldn't be any doubt about that," and the guide went on to tell several incidents that showed beyond question that the man he had had with him could not see.

Nick had no doubt that this man was John Crabbe. So he continued his journey.

Before this he had changed his ordinary clothes for a rough suit, and, with a disguise to match, he now looked like a genuine Westerner.

He made for the place where the guide had said that Crabbe sent him back.

The day before he came to it he met a man on horseback, and, of course, they spoke to each other, for strangers always do in that wild part of the country.

"How, stranger?" said the horseman, pulling up.

"How?" returned Nick, stopping his own horse also.

"Got any tobacco?"

"Yep."

Nick himself did not chew, but on journeys like this he always carried a plug for just such meetings.

"Help yourself," he added, passing over the plug.

"Thankee, stranger," and the man started to take a bite.

"Don't do that," said Nick; "cut it in two. You're a durn long ways frum a store, an' I reckon ye're just about es fur from home. Thar ain't no plugs of tobacco growin' along back here for some miles."

"Huh! yer right thar. I've be'n over this God-forsaken country often enough to know that."

He cut the plug in two, and handed half back.

"You know the country, do you?" asked Nick.

"Yep. Don't you?"

"No. It's new to me."

"Prospectin'?"

"Waal, no, not exactly. I'm huntin' fer a blind man."

"So? Waal, that's funny."

"I know 'tis. Seems a durn strange place fer a blind man to hide in, but that's the case, just the same."

"I wasn't thinkin' of that, stranger. That's funny enough, too, I'll allow; but I was thinkin' of suthin' else when I said that's funny."

"What were it, stranger?"

"Why, the two geezers I've be'n guidin' an' cookin' fer was on the same kind of a hunt."

"Dum my insides, but this is lucky!" cried Nick. "Say, stranger, how fur away be them two?"

"Friends of yourn?"

"Yes."

"Then 'tain't as funny as it was before. Ef yer all on the same errand, it's natural enough."

"Waal, we be. We're goin' to chase that blind man around the world ef we have to, until we get him."

"An' take his diamond away frum him, eh?"

"'Tain't hisn!"

The horseman laughed, and winked one eye.

"Reckon 'tain't," said he; "reckon it b'longs to the man that is slick enough to git it, an' strong enough to hold onto it, eh? But it ain't none of my business. I was half a mind to stick to them friends of yourn, though, an' make 'em share the diamond with me."

"They wouldn't hev let you in. They'd hev murdered you first," said Nick calmly.

"Reckon they would."

"I'm s'prised they spoke to you about it at all."

"Oh, waal, fellers git friendly when they're on the tramp together fer some days. I overheard 'em talkin' about it, an' I asked questions. When they seen that I'd hearn a good deal, they up an' told me the hull story."

"How the blind man stole the diamond frum them, I s'pose."

"Yep. That is, frum a friend of theirn," and again the horseman winked.

"That's right," said Nick, wondering just what they had told him.

"And you're that friend, ain't ye?"

"Reckon I be."

"Waal," and the horseman chuckled, "ef you don't want a dose of hot lead straight from a gun, I advise ye, stranger, not to let yer friends see thet yer comin'."

"Think they wouldn't welcome me, eh?"

"Oh, I reckon they'd make ye right welcome, and I reckon they'd be decent enough to bury ye afterward. Don't believe they'd leave ye fer the crows to pick."

The horseman chuckled again.

"I see," said Nick, "thet you're onto this. You've got it about straight. So now give me a hint as to whar they be an' I'll take my chances of a dose of lead and a burial."

"Great snakes, but won't there be a ruction when you fellers git together, 'specially ef ye find the blind man! Wisht I could be thar to see. Wall, stranger, it's all the same to me. I don't give a dum which of ye gits thet thar diamond. So, ef ye keep on es ye be, bearin' a leetle to the west of south, ye'll come to a fork of the Colorado River.

"I left yer friends thar. They started down the river on this bank. That was day before yesterday."

"Good!" said Nick. "I'm obliged to ye, stranger."

"Goin'?"

"Yep."

"Ain't got no dyin' messages to hev sent home, eh?"

"Not yet. So long!"

"So long, stranger! Ye'll be one agin' two, not countin' the blind man, an' dummed ef I don't hope you'll win out."

Nick galloped away. He turned in the saddle after he had gone a quarter of a mile or so, and saw the horseman still looking toward him.

"That fellow is no fool," thought Nick. "I shouldn't be surprised if I was to see him again before I get through with this. What idiots Donnelson and Matthews were to let him drop to their business."

He pushed on far into the evening of that day. Indeed, he did not stop for the night until he came to the fork of the Colorado that the horseman had spoken of.

He tethered his horse, made a supper from provisions that he had laid in at the last village he passed, and lay down on the bare ground for sleep.

During the last three days he had passed as many houses, and how far he was from one now he did not know.

It was, indeed, a strange place for a blind man to hide in.

The time came when he understood why Crabbe had taken this course, but at present he could not make out why the blind man had not struck for the cities of the East, where he could stand a chance of selling the Devil's Eye.

For a few hours the detective slept like a log, but at the first sign of daylight he was up having breakfast.

When it was light enough to see the ground clearly he was on his journey again.

His trained eye detected many signs that others had been this way a short time before, and he was confident that the horseman had not misguided him.

The country grew wilder as he went on.

Now and then the river plunged over steep ledges, and again it sank to the bottom of deep cañons.

About the middle of the afternoon the detective came to a high ridge.

There was nothing to do but climb, especially as he saw signs that others had climbed it recently, so up he went.

The top was bare, and gave a good view in various directions, and Nick paused to take it in.

Forward some three miles he saw a thin column of smoke rising.

"A miner's camp," he wondered, "or is it the game I'm after?"

He looked behind him, and miles away on the plain he saw what seemed to be dark spots in motion.

Indians? Possibly, but hardly likely. He hadn't seen a half dozen red men since he struck into Arizona.

He looked for a full minute to make sure that what he saw was in motion, and then he took out his telescope.

This was a very powerful spyglass that could be shut up small enough to be carried easily in a coat pocket, but it measured nearly two feet when opened its full length.

Through the glass, the detective made out easily that the moving specks were horsemen.

There were four of them, and they were galloping rapidly southward.

That was not the course he had been taking during the day. Therefore they were not pursuing him—and why should anybody pursue him?

No reason at all—and yet the detective thought about it, and peered more sharply through the glass.

It was plain that the horsemen were not coming directly toward him. They were making apparently for a ford in the river that he had noticed a few miles back.

Presently Nick shut up his glass and put it in his pocket.

His face was very grave, for he had recognized the man riding at the head of the four as the one who the day before had given him information about Donnelson and Matthews.

CHAPTER V.

NICK AND HIS "FRIENDS."

"Trouble ahead," he muttered.

In truth, the detective was very anxious.

If he was on the right track, he might come up to the men he was pursuing before they were attacked.

But suppose he was not on the right track? What if that horseman had misdirected him purposely?

He gave his attention once more to the thin column of smoke rising ahead.

"I'll chance it," he decided.

Having come to his decision, he dismounted and took from the saddle some small articles that he wanted to keep with him.

Then he turned the horse loose.

"Find your way home if you can, old nag," he said. "You've done me good service, but I shan't need you any longer."

The horse looked at him in a surprised sort of way, and went to nibbling the grass.

He seemed so contented that Nick had a second thought.

"I'll take one more chance," he muttered.

The horse was now on top of the ridge, where he might be seen from a considerable distance.

Nick led him part way down the slope and tethered him with a very long rope.

"There!" he said; "you've got grass enough within your reach to live well for a couple of days."

This done, the detective hurried on afoot.

Keeping close to the river, he came soon to a place where it ran through a very narrow and very deep cañon.

A couple of fallen trees lay across it, forming a bridge.

The branches of the trees had been chopped away, and it was plain that horses had been led across.

Nick went over, and, following the horses' tracks, he was soon going down a slope through a forest.

In a quarter of an hour he saw again the smoke that he had seen from the ridge.

It came from a miner's cabin.

A brook ran near the cabin, and behind the cabin was a rough shed in which there were three horses.

There was nothing in sight to show that other cabins were near.

As Nick cautiously approached, he listened for the sound of men at work.

He heard nothing of that kind, but as he came close to the cabin there was a sound of voices talking in angry tones within.

"Men who talk like that," thought Nick, "can't hear much except their own voices."

He went forward rapidly, and presently stood at the door of the cabin, which was open a crack.

"I'm tired of it!" he heard one voice say. "This denying has got to stop right now. Own up, Crabbe! We offer to divide with you. It's divide, or, by George, we'll take it from you, with your life!"

"That's right," said another ugly voice.

"Now, then, gentlemen," said a third voice, that of Crabbe, "if you think it's decent to hound and worry a man who isn't able to defend himself, I don't, but I can't help myself. I tell you I don't know anything about the diamond. I'll do anything I can to prove what I say. Delmar made me take off my clothes. Do you want me to do the same now?"

"No!" growled the first; "we'll take your clothes off when we get ready. The point is now that we are still willing to give you a chance to live. Give up the stone, or tell us where it is, and we'll share with you. Refuse, and you die!"

Nick heard the blind man draw a long breath.

"There's nothing that I can refuse," he said hopelessly, "for I can't do the impossible. You used to be my friends——"

"Bah!"

"And you'd better think it over a little longer before you do anything violent."

"We'll decide that for ourselves."

A moment of silence followed.

It seemed to Nick that he had arrived just at the time when the trouble had come to a head.

He pushed the door softly open a few inches farther.

Thus he got a view of the whole of the one room in the cabin.

He took it in at one glance and acted instantly.

At a rough table in the middle of the room sat John Crabbe.

There was no mistaking him, for his sightless eyes were staring straight ahead.

Evidently he had been interrupted by the others while he was eating, for a few dishes were on the table with bread and cold meat, and there was a glass of water and a cup of coffee.

In front of and beside him stood the other two in threatening attitudes.

One had a miner's mallet raised over his head, while the other was ready to strike with a clubbed rifle.

It looked as if they were hesitating one last instant, each waiting, perhaps, for the other to give the signal to commit murder.

Meantime the look on the blind man's face showed plainly that he did not know how close he sat to death.

"No question that Crabbe is blind!" thought Nick, as he leaped across the threshold.

Mallet and rifle were descending to do their fatal work when he strode in.

The detective caught the blows on his arms, turning them aside and wrenching the rifle from one man's hands, while he sent the mallet flying across the room.

"Fair play!" cried Nick; "give the blind man a chance!"

He then raised the rifle himself, and stood with his back to Crabbe to protect him, if the others should rush upon him.

They were too surprised at first to stir, for the detective's unexpected rush had sent each one back a pace or two, and they stood there, staring open-mouthed.

Crabbe, meantime, had given a shuddering groan, and was crouching beneath the table.

Then the man who had had the rifle spoke. Nick learned later that it was Donnelson.

"What the devil do you mean?" he demanded hoarsely. "Who are you?"

"That's a double-barreled question, stranger," returned Nick, "an' I'll answer the fust of it fust. I mean that I can't stand by an' see cold-blooded murder done, that's what I mean. I'm bad enough, God knows, but not so dum low as that."

"We were only trying to frighten him," muttered the other—that is, Matthews.

"Frighten him, eh? How did you expect to frighten a man that can't see, in that way?"

He paused a moment, and, as the others made no remark, he went on:

"I hearn some talk of a diamond as I come to the door. Now, ef thar's be'n any funny business, I'll help ye settle it all, even and aboveboard. I'm a stranger to the hull outfit. So ye can state yer cases an' I'll be the jedge. How's that?"

"It's nonense!" exclaimed Donnelson. "This is no business of yours. We won't have you here. You'll have to get out."

"Thankee," replied Nick, sitting down on the table; "I'm goin' to set here a spell. I ain't answered yer second question yet. Now, understand, gents, ef thar's any more trouble it will be with me. I'm Red Jake, of Montana, an' ef ye're acquainted up that way ye know that Red Jake is a holy terror."

He leaned the rifle against the table and drew one of his revolvers.

"It speaks right out in meetin' when thar's trouble," said he; "it's a self-cocker, an' has a hair trigger."

The detective smiled pleasantly, and swung his feet back and forth.

Donnelson and Matthews exchanged glances.

"Come on," said the latter; "this is no place for us."

Both started to leave.

"Hold on," warned Nick, swinging his weapon around carelessly. "This is jest the best place possible for ye, an' I'll tell ye why: I've got suthin' to say to you gents that'll interest ye."

They looked at him doubtfully.

Neither cared to risk a shot from his gun.

"Better set down," said Nick. "The hull three of ye's in danger that ye haven't dreamed of. I can tell ye about it, an' ef you'll stand by me, I'll stand by you."

The men looked startled.

"Ef you fellers," continued the detective, "hev got hold of a diamond that mebbe ain't yourn, why that's all right, an' you shouldn't quarrel over it. But it's goin' to git ye into trouble right quick."

"What do you mean?" asked Donnelson.

And Crabbe, who had slipped back into his chair, added nervously:

"I don't understand all this. We haven't any diamond."

"Like enough," responded Nick. "I'm not sayin' ye have, but thar's them as thinks ye have, and that's what makes the trouble. See?"

"No, I don't," said Matthews. "Do you mean that there are officers after us?"

"Nope," replied Nick promptly, "though that may be. I dunno. But thar's others after ye, sure. Now, take seats, gents, an' let me tell ye how I come here, and how I know what I do. Thar won't be no more trouble between us, onless ye want to have it with me, an', fer my part, I want to be friendly."

Again Donnelson and Matthews exchanged glances.

Evidently they thought it best to humor this strange man, for they sat down at the table—one on a broken chair, the other on an empty box.

Nick took from his pocket a folded, soiled paper.

When it was unfolded it was about a foot square, and it was printed in red ink.

He passed it silently to Donnelson, who read it, while Matthews looked over his shoulder.

It was an offer of five hundred dollars reward for the capture of a desperado called "Red Jake," and it was signed by the sheriff of a county in Montana.

The paper was genuine.

Patsy had found it in the pocket of a crook captured in Montana, and had kept it for curiosity.

The "Red Jake" mentioned was now in jail at Helena.

"That thar docyment," said Nick, "alludes to yours truly. I killed my man. It was a fair fight, but the sheriff, you see, thinks things orter be evened up. He made it too hot for me in Montana, an' I decided to emigrate. So I've be'n huntin' fer new diggin's ever sence. I like to keep that docyment jest so's I can remember who I am."

He smiled as he took it back, folded it again, and put it in his pocket.

"Bein' on the tramp," he continued, "a couple o' days ago, I come acrost a feller what had been with you as guide an' cook. He told me about you, and I know you're the men, frum his description. This feller said as how you'd got the most vallyble diamond in the world, an' he made me an offer to go shares with him in gittin' it away frum you."

Both Donnelson and Matthews started at this information.

"I wouldn't go in," said Nick. "The law's agin' me up North, an' I didn't want to be in no hurry about gittin' the law agin' me down here in the South. So we didn't hitch."

"Well," interrupted Donnelson, "we know who you mean. We told him something about our business here after he had overheard us talking about it. But what difference——"

"Listen," said Nick seriously. "Back here a piece is a high ridge. You remember it, I s'pose, fer I reckon you come over it. Waal, as I was comin' over it this afternoon I seen four men on horses gallopin' to beat the band. They wasn't comin' straight this way. Prob'ly they was making off som'eres to get more to help. But they're huntin' fer you, an' don't you forgit it! Their leader was the feller that hed be'n your guide."

The men were greatly impressed.

"We'd better light out," suggested Donnelson.

"I reckon not," responded Nick. "They'd have the advantage of ye on the plains, fer they know the country. We don't. We'll do better to stay whar we are an' fight it out."

"You say 'we'!"

"Yep. I'll stand by ye, as I said, ef you'll stand by me."

Donnelson and Matthews looked at each other.

"Ah!" groaned Crabbe, "I wish I had never taken this journey."

"Do you suppose," asked Matthews, "that these men know where we are?"

"I should think likely they'd find ye," replied Nick. "I did by jest trampin' along without knowin' whar I was goin'. They know the country. Don't they know of this here cabin?"

"Probably."

"Don't belong to you-uns, does it?"

"No."

"It's as much mine as anybody's," said the blind man. "Years ago, when I could see, I prospected round here with a partner. We put up this cabin."

"Oh, is thar any other, anywheres near?"

It was Nick who asked the question.

"No," said Crabbe, "not within many miles, unless one has been built within a year or two."

"Reckon that ain't likely."

Donnelson and Matthews whispered together.

"Well," said Donnelson, afterward, "we seem to be in a trap, and we're obliged to you for giving us warning. If Crabbe would give up the diamond, we might all clear out before there's any trouble——"

"They'd follow ye North," put in Nick.

"How can I give up what I haven't got?" cried the blind man.

Matthews began an angry reply, but Nick interrupted.

"I tell ye, gents," said he, "this ain't no time to quarrel among yerselves. Let the diamond alone fer a spell. Hark!"

The men paled and listened.

A thud, thud of horses' hoofs could be heard far down the gulch that began near the cabin.

"That's them, or I'm an Injun!" said Nick, in a low voice. "Now, see here, gents, to show ye that I mean to stick by ye, I'll try to stand these fellers off."

CHAPTER VI.

DARKNESS AND BATTLE.

The detective did not wait for reply, but went from the cabin, and strode down the trail a few rods.

He halted when he got sight of the horsemen coming up.

There was not less than a dozen of them, and at their head rode the man to whom he had given half a plug of tobacco.

Nick raised his hand in a gesture that the horsemen understood, and they halted.

"Hello!" called the leader; "you found yer friends, did ye?"

"I did," Nick answered, hoping that the men in the cabin could not hear what was said.

"Waal," said the leader, "I've got a few friends of my own here. We've come to jine ye."

"Ye don't jine, strangers."

"Eh? Why not?"

"'Cause I say so. Better let that be enough. We're well off as it is, an' so be you."

The detective had a revolver in his hand.

For a moment the horsemen talked together, and he could not hear what passed.

Presently the leader spoke again.

"'Pears like you're thinking of fight," said he.

"That's what I be," responded Nick cheerfully. "Ain't had one fer some days, but I ain't got nuthin' agin' you fellers, not yet, an' I won't fight onless ye give me reason."

"We don't misonderstand ye," said the leader seriously. "You-uns don't mean to let we-uns come no farther?"

"Yer dead right."

"But we ain't done nuthin'——"

"Not yet. I know that."

"Ef you rile these friends of mine, thar'll be hell to pay."

"We kin pay, mister."

"Shoot the cuss out of the road!" demanded a voice just behind the leader.

As he spoke, this man reined his horse to one side of the narrow trail to get a shot at Nick.

Up came the detective's revolver arm. There was a flash and a report, and the man dropped backward from his horse while he was in the act of aiming with a rifle.

Nick's bullet had gone into his right shoulder.

"Just as much more of the same as you-uns want," called Nick sternly. "The trail's too narrer fer more'n one or two of ye to come up at a time. I've got a couple of these popguns, and my friends have some more. I'll take ye one at a time, with great pleasure, ef that's what ye really want."

The sudden shot and the falling of the horseman threw the others into a panic.

Their horses were frightened, and went to rearing and plunging madly.

No one among them had been prepared for such a bold fighter as this.

Some near the rear shouted angrily to charge up the trail, but that could not be done, because the leader's horse, which was the most unmanageable of the lot, blocked the way.

Nobody behind could fire at Nick without danger of hitting their friends in front.

There was a sound of many voices, some were commanding one thing, some another, but the end of it was that they all turned about and rode down the trail and out of sight.

The leader and another helped the wounded man.

As they got away, the leader turned and shouted:

"Ye've taken the fust trick, stranger, but, by Jove, we'll sweep the board afore we git through!"

"Try it!" retorted Nick.

When they were out of sight, he walked slowly back to the cabin.

Donnelson and Matthews stood in the doorway, each with a revolver. Crabbe still sat at the table, and his face was deathly pale.

His revolver lay by his plate.

"You're a fighter, if there ever was one," said Matthews, "and if you hadn't been here to warn us they would have got us."

"They'll call again," responded Nick.

"Do you think they'll come before night?" asked Crabbe.

"No. Let's have grub and think over how we can stand 'em off again."

He went into the cabin.

"You can eat, if you want to," said Donnelson. "I couldn't force down anything. Somebody ought to stand guard, anyway, and I'll do it."

"All right," replied the detective.

He wondered if Donnelson would try to sneak away, and he didn't care much if he did.

For Nick was as sure as ever that the man who had the diamond was John Crabbe, and Donnelson and Matthews both might go now, if they wanted to, for all he cared.

Crabbe had denied again and again that he knew anything about the Devil's Eye, but Nick didn't believe a word he said.

"There's plenty of coffee in the pot," said Crabbe, "and you'll find some canned stuff in the cupboard."

Nick helped himself and sat down.

Matthews, pale and evidently suffering from fright, also sat at the table, but he ate little.

Donnelson did not sneak away, and before supper was over he came back to the cabin.

"Well?" said Nick, with his mouth full.

"We'll be in for it later," responded Donnelson. "If Crabbe would only do the square thing, we might all four of us get away."

"How?"

"Cross the cañon on the fallen trees just above here and set the trees on fire. Then they couldn't come after us."

"Huh!" retorted Nick, "you don't know these men. It wouldn't be many miles out of their way to cross by the ford, and then what would you do?"

"If I thought they could overtake us, we could ride in a cañon."

"Where they would starve us, if they didn't pick us off with bullets, one after another. No, sirree! the best thing we can do is to stay right here and fight it out. Four against a dozen isn't the worst odds."

"You can't count Crabbe."

"That's so. I forgot his game eyes. Waal, three agin' a dozen. Now, ef you can shoot as well as I can——"

"Pooh! it's impossible."

"But you can handle a gun."

"Yes."

"Waal, then, we must fight."

"I swear I'd rather run! What do you say, Crabbe?"

Crabbe fingered his glass of water for a moment and took a sip before replying.

"I can't say anything that I haven't said before," he replied, at last. "I wish I never had come on this journey! But, as it stands, I can see that the only thing to do is to follow this man's advice. It's all the fault of you fellows. You would have it that I stole Delmar's diamond. You followed me and blabbed about it to strangers. Result, a gang of desperate ruffians who will kill us all to get possession of something that isn't here."

The blind man spoke so earnestly that Nick almost believed him.

Donnelson and Matthews looked hatefully at Crabbe, but said nothing.

"Why did you say we'll be in for it?" asked Nick.

"I've seen them," Donnelson answered. "I went up the slope to where the trees have been cleared away. The gang is down in the valley. They're having grub and attending to the wounded man. When it's dark, they'll come again."

"It'll be dark early," remarked Matthews. "Clouds are coming up rapidly."

Crabbe drew a long breath.

"Is it going to rain?" he asked.

"Yes."

Nick finished his supper and lit a pipe, and his coolness had a good effect on the others.

They went to eating, and, for a time, no angry words were spoken about the Devil's Eye.

As Matthews had foretold, it grew dark very early.

Nick had been smoking in the doorway.

At last he turned and said:

"Reckon they won't be long in coming now. We'd better get ready for 'em."

"What shall we do?" asked Matthews.

"Reckon they'll think we're shut up in the cabin, ef we go out an' leave the door closed. They won't come up the gulch again. They are more likely to leave their horses in the valley and climb the hill, so as to come down at us through the trees."

"They're four to our one!" muttered Donnelson.

"Pooh! see that rock about four rod from here?"

Nick pointed to a bit of ledge that showed above the ground near the beginning of the trail down the gulch.

It was now too dark to see it clearly, but they knew what he meant.

"Two of ye," continued the detective, "can git behind that rock. It's as good as a fort. T'other man an' me will go up thar," pointing in the opposite direction; "thar's another rock thar. 'Tain't so good, but it will do. Then, when they come down the hill, we can have 'em almost under cross-fire."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Matthews; "come on, George."

"That's right," said Nick; "you two hold that side, and yer blind friend an' I'll take t'other. Prob'ly I can shoot well enough fer two, an' Sightless can load my guns fer me. What do you say, Sightless?"

He turned to Crabbe.

"I am with you," was the blind man's reply.

He gulped down the water in his glass, and felt his way to a bunk at the side of the room.

When he came back he had a cartridge box in his hand which he held out.

"You mean this fer me?" asked Nick, taking it.

"Yes. Lead me to the place you spoke of."

Donnelson and Matthews were already lying down behind the rock Nick had directed them to.

The detective took Crabbe by the arm and led him up the slope a few rods.

"Here we are," he said. "Thar's room enough behind this rock fer one. You lie flat an' no bullet'll hit ye."

"And you?" said Crabbe.

"Oh, I'll git what shelter I can, an' plug the enemy."

"All this," groaned Crabbe, "for a miserable diamond!"

"Not so mis'able ef it's wuth what I've hearn tell," responded Nick; "but be quiet! Dum me ef they ain't comin' now!"

They heard stealthy footsteps up among the trees toward the top of the hill.

The sounds drew nearer.

Suddenly there were shots from the rock where Donnelson and Matthews had hidden.

"The fools!" muttered Nick; "they shouldn't have let the enemy draw their fire. T'other side should have fired first."

There was nothing to show that the shots had done any damage to the enemy, but there was plenty to indicate how foolish Donnelson and Matthews had been in firing so soon.

Up to this time Nick had not been able to see anybody on the slope, but almost immediately after the shots there were half a dozen flashes at a little distance in front.

The woods roared with the reports of rifles.

All plainly had been aimed at the place from which the first shots came.

There was a loud cry of pain.

"Somebody's got it!" said Nick.

He aimed in the darkness at the spot from which the enemy's shots had been fired.

In rapid succession he shot five times. Then he passed his weapon to Crabbe and took up the other.

"Load her!" he ordered.

He heard Crabbe fumbling with the cartridge box.

Ahead were sounds of confusion.

"There's more of 'em than I s'posed."

It was the voice of the leader.

"Are ye hurt, Dan?" asked another voice.

"Yes; I'm done fer."

Nick thought the enemy was about to retreat, and if they had done so he would not have fired again, except to scare them.

But another shot came from the rock where Donnelson and Matthews lay, and it brought a hot volley in return.

For the first time since the fight began, Nick saw a shadowy form moving among the trees.

He got on his knees and fired, and the form reeled and disappeared without a sound.

"Huh!" he muttered, "it would have been better if he'd yelled. That might have made a panic."

The enemy now turned their guns in the direction from which the fatal shots came.

They were more cautious, and appeared to be hiding behind trees as they fired.

A bullet spatted the rock behind which Nick and Crabbe were half sheltered, and the detective threw himself full length on the ground and waited.

Crabbe had reloaded his first revolver, and handed it to him.

"Will they rush us, do you think?" asked Crabbe, in a singularly cool tone.

"Reckon so," Nick answered; "wait a jiffy."

Several rifle shots were fired, and the bullets hit the rock and tore up the leaves near by.

"Good marksmen," muttered the detective, straining his eyes to get sight of anything moving, to shoot at.

One more shot came from the place where Donnelson and Matthews lay.

It was not answered by the enemy.

The attacking party doubtless perceived that the damage was coming from the other quarter.

Then the expected rush came.

There had been a slight pause in the firing, and Nick had not answered with a single shot.

Suddenly Nick saw dim forms running toward him.

Half rising, with a revolver in each hand, he let go. Crack! crack! barked the little weapons, and one form dropped here, another there.

A flash, and a bullet tore the detective's hat off.

The man who fired it dropped immediately afterward with a loud cry.

Nick had two shots left in each weapon.

A sharp crack at his side caused him to turn.

Crabbe was on his knees firing into the darkness.

"Better let me do that," said Nick sharply. "We mustn't waste ammunition."

"Yes, that's right," responded Crabbe, lying flat again; "but it is so exciting! I thought I might happen to hit somebody."

It looked as if his shot had been a lucky one, for a form was seen to stagger, and it was not a form that Nick had shot at.

The incident set the detective's brain in a whirl, for he saw light on the mystery of the Devil's Eye that he had not seen before. But there was no time to consider it then, as three of the enemy were still rushing toward him.

They were firing as they came, and Nick's ear tingled as a bullet tore past.

He felt a sharp heat along his forearm as a bullet sped up his sleeve and went out at the shoulder.

He changed his tactics.

Instead of kneeling to shoot, he leaped to his feet and dashed toward the enemy.

One shot brought down the nearest man.

The next Nick was so close to that he felled him with a blow, using his revolver as a club.

The third turned about suddenly and ran, and Nick let him go, for the battle was over.

CHAPTER VII.

MID THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

"Now, Sightless," said Nick, returning to the rock, "we'll go back to the cabin."

Crabbe stood up and placed his hand on Nick's arm.

The detective noticed how steady he was.

He had spoken of being excited, and yet he seemed to be as cool as Nick himself was.

Nick led him to the cabin, and, pausing at the door, called:

"All over, pardners. Better come in out of the wet."

This was less joke than truth, for rain was beginning to fall.

A man came hurriedly up.

It was Matthews.

"Whar's yer pard?" asked Nick.

"Dead!" replied Matthews, in a ghastly tone. "Shot through the head at the first volley."

"Huh! What did he expose himself fer?"

"Oh, he was a fool, of course!" shuddered Matthews. "I didn't think we ought to fire so soon, but he would have it, and, as soon as we'd shot, he stood half up to see if we'd hit anybody.

"Then he gave a yell, and tumbled back. That was the last of him."

"I heard him yell," said Nick, "and hoped it was one of the enemy. Waal, we've had our scrimmage. Now we'll have to see about the losses. To begin with, are you hurt?"

"No; are you?"

"Scratched a bit, I reckon. Got a lantern here?"

Nick could have used his pocket lantern, but did not do so for fear it would have given him away, and he had his work yet to do, for the diamond had not been recovered.

"Yes," said Crabbe, "there's a lantern somewhere in the corner there."

Matthews got it, and struck a light.

Meantime Nick took off his coat and rolled up his sleeve.

There was a blister several inches long on his arm raised by the bullet that passed up his sleeve.

"Reckon that's all," he said; "and the tip of my ear gone. Waal, let's go out an' see how the enemy stood it," and Nick took the lantern and started out of the cabin.

"You'll make a plain target for any that are left," warned Matthews.

"Reckon they ain't got any fight left," replied Nick.

He went up among the trees and saw two forms moving slowly about.

"Don't shoot, stranger," called a voice; "we've had enough."

"Just as you say," returned Nick. "We're feelin' tol'able pert down our way, an' ef thar's any more gents in the country as wants a lickin' we'll oblige 'em."

The man made no reply, and Nick went up to him.

He found that the fellow and his companion were both wounded.

"Did any of ye git off without bein' hit?" asked the detective.

"Yes, three."

"Whar be they?"

"They ran."

"Waal, they had sense. I see that you two can walk. Now, gents, go an' git your runaways and make 'em come back here to take care of their dead and wounded. We won't disturb ye. We'll help. But, remember," and Nick spoke sternly, "we'll drop the hull gang fer the wolves an' crows ef ye try any sharp tricks."

"Good Lord!" groaned one of them; "you needn't think we want any more!"

"I don't; but I'm jest p'intin' out to ye the wisdom of behavin' yerselves."

The men went away and soon returned with those who had run.

Meantime Nick had been carefully over the little battlefield trying to find if there were any of the wounded whom he could help.

There were two whom he made more comfortable with bandages torn from cloth that he had Matthews bring from the cabin.

Five of the attacking party were dead, including their leader.

"It was a case of had to," thought Nick seriously. "Fight was the only thing that would do for these ruffians."

It took more than two hours for those who remained alive to help away the wounded and carry off the bodies of the dead to the place where the horses of the party had been left.

When all was quiet around the cabin again, Nick said that the next task must be to bury Donnelson.

Matthews agreed, and another hour or more was spent at it.

All this time the rain was falling in a drizzle.

Crabbe sat in the cabin, with his head on his hands at the table.

It was midnight when at last Nick and Matthews came in for good.

"I don't know how you-uns feel," said Nick, then, "but I'm ready for a snooze."

"There's no sleep for me," responded Matthews.

Nevertheless, he lay down on a bunk, and Crabbe did likewise, and it was only a few minutes before heavy breathing showed that Matthews was asleep.

Nick, of course, did not close his eyes.

The storm increased as the night went on, until, at daybreak, it was a heavy downfall of rain, with a great deal of thunder and lightning.

Matthews slept through the racket, and Nick pretended to.

It was still very dark when he saw Crabbe cautiously get up and go to the door. Nick perceived that his movements were not those of a blind man.

Nick's last doubts on the case were set at rest. He saw that John Crabbe was what is called a nyctalops—that is, a person who is blind in the daytime, but who can see at night a great deal better than men whose eyes are sound.

Such cases are rare, but they exist, and this was one of them.

Crabbe had deceived all his friends into thinking that he was totally blind.

So he was by day or lamplight; but in the evening, or where it was what we would call dark, he could see perfectly.

That, of course, accounted for his shot during the battle.

He had seen his target clearly, and, being a good marksman, had dropped his man easily.

More than ever certain that he had the diamond, Nick watched him.

The detective would not make the mistake of laying hands on him until he knew where the stone was.

The nyctalops had been clever enough to steal and conceal it thus far, and all would probably be lost if an attack was made on him too soon.

Crabbe stepped out into the rain, and Nick got up and followed him.

It was astonishing how the nyctalops made his way with perfect ease and certainty over the rough ground.

The detective had to walk with the greatest care to keep from stumbling or slipping, while Crabbe went ahead without hesitation or pause.

He turned from the trail, and presently clambered down into the cañon through which the river ran.

Nick was wondering how he should manage to follow in the darkness, when he heard a step behind him.

Wheeling about quickly, he found that Matthews was close behind him.

"Something aroused me," said Matthews, in a whisper, "and I saw you go out. Is he ahead?"

"Yes," Nick replied, wondering a little.

"He's hidden the diamond down there."

With some excitement, Matthews was about to push by the detective and descend.

Nick held him back.

"Wait a bit," he said; "we'll discuss this first."

"What!" exclaimed Matthews, noticing the change in the detective's way of speaking.

"I'll tell you something," said Nick. "I am a detective, and I am after that diamond. When I get it, I shall return it to Philip Delmar. I've nothing against you, Mr. Matthews, but if you hinder me you'll regret it."

For a moment Matthews was speechless.

"A detective!" he gasped presently; "and you followed us?"

"I followed Crabbe. So did you. I am aware that neither you nor Donnelson had anything to do with the theft of the stone, but you have both been after it, and you have no intention of restoring it to its owner."

"Well, but Mr.——"

"Carter. Usually called Nick, for short."

"Good heavens!"

Matthews was so overcome that he sank upon a wet rock and breathed hard.

"Now, then," said Nick coolly, "I have given you some valuable information. I expect you to give me some in return."

"Anything you ask, Mr. Carter," said Matthews faintly. "I don't want any trouble with you."

"I suppose not. You are Crabbe's partner?"

"Yes; but not in this diamond matter."

"I know; but you have been acquainted with him a long time. Do you know that he is a nyctalops?"

"I have sometimes suspected it."

"But you didn't know it?"

"No."

"It is the fact. Do you know how he conceals that stone?"

"No. I cannot guess, but I feel certain he took it."

"So do I. Be very careful not to keep any facts from me."

"I am telling you the truth, so help me!"

"Very well. When you and Donnelson overtook Crabbe, was it at the cabin?"

"Not exactly. We found some of his things there, and waited."

"When did he show up?"

"Last evening."

"After dark?"

"Yes."

"That was natural. Did you suspect he was a nyctalops then?"

"I did, but said nothing."

"Where had he been?"

"He came from this direction."

"Have you seen him go down into the cañon since?"

"No. We kept him before our eyes all that night and all through the day till you came. We were trying to badger him into giving up the stone."

"And you went to the edge of murder."

Matthews shuddered.

"I should like to be well out of this," he said; "and yet it was I who suggested to Donnelson that we follow Crabbe and get the stone away from him."

"You may be out of it as soon as you please, Mr. Matthews. I have nothing against you, as I said before. If you want to, return to the cabin. You will be in no danger. I am going down into the cañon."

"I'd rather go with you, Mr. Carter. My mind has changed about the Devil's Eye, and I would like to help restore it to my old friend, Delmar."

"Very well. I have no objection, but I warn you that there will be danger. Crabbe has his revolver with him."

"And he has a rifle hidden below, if I am not mistaken, but I prefer to go with you."

"Very well. We must have a light, or we'll go down faster than will be good for our health."

"I will go back to the cabin and get the lantern."

"You don't need to."

Nick brought out his pocket lantern and flashed it.

They saw a very steep and slippery path before them, and they made their way carefully down it to the bottom.

Then they were on level ground, with the river at one side and the steep wall of rock at the other.

"I wonder," thought Nick, "which way Crabbe went from here?"

His question was quickly answered.

There was a flash from down the stream. A sharp report followed instantly, and Matthews fell back, with one choking groan.

He had been shot through the heart.

Nick swung his lantern to one side, holding it at arm's length, but in such a way that the rays fell ahead.

They did not reach far enough to show him the man who had fired, but that was of little consequence, for within a second after the first shot there came another.

The lantern dropped from the detective's hand.

It was smashed to pieces, and his fingers tingled with the shock of the passing bullet.

Nick knew his peril.

That mysterious foe, the nyctalops, could see him in the darkness, while the detective could see nothing.

He shrank quickly against the cañon wall.

To his satisfaction, he found that the cliff jutted out a little there, and he had time to draw breath and think.

Another shot came and chipped off a bit of the cliff in front of the detective.

"If I show my head to shoot," thought Nick, "I'll get a bullet in it. Meantime he can come straight to me, and he'll see me before I know where he is."

At this moment, the cañon roared with thunder.

A long lightning flash made the deep channel as light as day.

Nick took instant advantage of this, and looked out.

A few rods downstream was Crabbe, with his rifle in one hand.

The other hand was pressed to his eyes, for he could see nothing while the lightning lasted.

The detective took off his hat and placed it on a nub of the cliff, where he had been standing, and then leaped to the water's edge, where he crouched.

It was then dark again, and he could not see Crabbe.

But a second later the rifle flashed, and Nick heard his hat drop to the ground.

"Fooled him!" thought the detective.

He heard rapid steps.

Crabbe was running up in the darkness to make sure that his shot had been fatal.

Nick could see nothing, and he would not risk a pistol shot in the dark.

Then came a long-continued lightning flash right over the cañon.

Crabbe halted, stone-blind in the light, within a few steps of the detective.

Nick leaped at him, and Crabbe heard him coming and raised the rifle.

Nick was in time to knock the barrel up before the trigger was pulled.

The report was not heard above the racket of the thunder, which seemed to be tearing the tall cliffs to pieces.

Before another flash came, Nick had the most furious struggle he had ever known.

Desperation gave the nyctalops the strength and agility of a madman.

He could see, when Nick was blind.

Over the wet, slippery rocks they wrestled, the detective trying repeatedly to get in a settling blow.

At last the superior muscle of the detective began to tell, and Crabbe sank partly on his knees, and Nick was getting a grip on his throat.

Then a rain-loosened stone gave way. Crabbe fell from under, and Nick drew back quickly.

There was another of those long flashes, and by its light Nick saw Crabbe roll down a steep incline into the rushing river.

As he went, he cried:

"Curse you, but you won't get the Devil's Eye!"

Then the current swallowed him up, and the blackness of night came on again.

Three days later, Nick was at a small Arizona town where there was a telegraph station.

He wired Patsy in Denver, and learned from him that Delmar had gone to San Francisco.

"All right," Nick wired back; "I'll report to him there. You go back to New York."

Nick had found his horse cropping the grass where he had left him tethered on his way to find Crabbe.

The three horses that had been in the shed back of the cabin were killed during the battle.

The detective now journeyed on till he came to a railroad, and then by train to San Francisco.

There he hunted up Philip Delmar and placed in his hand the precious Devil's Eye.

"I shouldn't have been able to restore it," he said, "if I hadn't guessed at last how the trick was done when it was stolen from you."

"On my word," replied Delmar, "I hardly know which will give me the most pleasure—to get back the diamond or to find how I was fooled out of it."

"It was wonderfully simple," said Nick. "That was what made it such a hard problem to solve. When you accidentally shut off the lights, Crabbe could see to act. He quietly took up the stone and dropped it in his goblet.

"The glass was nearly full of water. As the diamond is colorless, it couldn't be seen in the water."

"Ye gods!" cried Delmar.

Nick smiled.

"I was puzzled about it for a long time," he added, "but I know now that while you were making your friends take off their clothes, the diamond was under your nose.

"Crabbe wanted a drink of water before he left. You gave it to him, and the diamond with it. He took the stone in his mouth as he drank, and walked out with it. You will remember that he did not speak to you after drinking. As soon as he was out of the room, of course, he took the stone from his mouth and put it in his pocket. I think he played the same thing on me in the cabin I told you about."

This was at the end of Nick's account of what had happened.

"He took a drink," continued the detective, "and went to his bunk for a box of cartridges. I think now that the diamond was in his glass of water all the time till then. Probably he carried it in his mouth to his bunk and then pocketed it.

"I can't be sure of that, and it doesn't matter. Maybe the Devil's Eye was at the bottom of the cañon at this time.

"At all events, when Crabbe tumbled into the river, I believed that the stone had gone with him.

"But I waited till the storm was over, and daylight got down into that hole. Then I looked around.

"I found a hollow in the cliff, where he had hidden provisions and blankets. He meant to hide there, you see, till all pursuit was over, and he reckoned if he was pursued that he could lure his enemies into the cañon and shoot them while they could not see, and he could.

"Having guessed how he tricked you, I didn't pull over his things in search of the stone.

"There was a little, natural basin at the bottom of the cave, made by the dripping of water from the rock above. Of course, it was full of water.

"I put my fingers in, and, sure enough, there was the Devil's Eye, invisible until it was brought out of the water."

It need hardly be said that Mr. Delmar rewarded Nick handsomely for his perilous and successful work.

What became of Crabbe was never known. There can be little doubt that he was drowned or dashed to death against the rocky sides of the river.

THE END.

"A Mystery of the Highway; or, Nick Carter's Automobile Problem," is the title of the story that will be found in the next issue of this weekly. In the solving of this strange riddle of crime, the great detective is called upon to use his wonderful intensity of purpose, and that discerning insight into human nature, coupled with a physical strength and courage, that has made him stand in a class by himself. Don't fail to read this story. It is No. 13, and will be out December 7th.

THE MAN AND THE HOUR;

Or, Sheridan Keene's Clever Artifice.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Jacob Moore, a man of considerable means, who lived in the country near Lynn, Mass., is found dead in bed by his housekeeper, Mrs. Haynie. Moore had been stabbed to death.

Hamilton French, of Boston, who had been Mr. Moore's lawyer for many years, and Detective Sheridan Keene, who has been assigned to the case by Inspector Watts, go to the Moore homestead. There Keene learns that Mr. Moore had disinherited his daughter, Mabel, because she had refused to marry Mr. Moore's nephew, Richard Thorpe, and took for a husband instead, Bob Jeffrey. The local constable, Jim Bragg, suspects Jeffrey to be the murderer.

Thorpe, who had lived with his uncle, had spent the night on which Mr. Moore had been murdered, at a road house. Mr. Moore's desk shows signs of having been rifled, and evidence that the murderer made his way into the house through a window, is found from mud tracks.

CHAPTER V.

THE MOVEMENTS OF MR. BRAGG.

The disclosures confidentially made by the constable opened up the case in a new light for Sheridan Keene, and the realization that its solution might prove difficult but added zest to his interest. It was plain that Bragg suspected Bob Jeffrey of having had a hand in the crime, and was doubtless possessed of more evidence involving him than he had yet disclosed. Wishing to hide his own identity and mission as long as possible, Keene decided that Bragg was the man for him to watch in a search for information.

He followed the constable to the front of the house. The news of the crime had spread, and many people had gathered in the front yard and along the street, where, despite the cold, they stood surveying the scene of the tragedy. Reporters were arriving from Lynn and Boston, and before nightfall the news was destined to become public property.

Detective Keene entered the hall, and observed Bragg and the coroner in close consultation in the parlor. Very evidently some decisive move was imminent, and the detective inferred that a speedy inquest was probable if this hustling officer of the law had already secured sufficient evidence to warrant it. That Keene was right in his conjecture presently appeared.

Hearing his name spoken, he turned toward the library, and saw Lawyer French beckoning to him from the partly open door.

"Come in here, Mr. Keene," said the lawyer. "I want you to meet Mabel and Mr. Thorpe."

"Certainly, sir," bowed the detective.

The attorney closed the door, and then introduced him to the two mentioned, who were the only other occupants of the room. Looking at the pale, sweet face of the girl, Keene could not but feel a thrill of pity for her, knowing too well the painful ordeal she was destined yet to meet, and he resolved to stand between her and greater sorrow, if by any means it was possible.

"I met your associate on his arrival," said Thorpe, with grave courtesy, as he again shook Sheridan Keene's hand. "It was he who told me you were here."

"The introduction will serve as a voucher for me, however," said Keene, smiling gravely.

"Ah, but I needed no voucher, Mr. Keene," replied Thorpe agreeably. "We all are very fond of Mr. French, who is like one of the family, and his friends are our friends, I hope. I have turned the investigation of this dreadful affair over to him."

"It is dreadful, indeed," bowed Keene, with sympathy.

"I understand the coroner has arrived. If you will excuse me, Mr. French, I think I will see if I can serve him in any way."

"Certainly, Richard," nodded the lawyer. "I'll join you with him presently. What is his name, by the way?"

"Mr. Clark. He was once on the bench, but retired because of ill health. He is improved now, and is a rather able lawyer."

"I will meet him in a few moments."

"I'll tell him so, sir."

And Richard Thorpe, who was evidently a man of instinctive gentility, bowed and softly withdrew.

"Mabel," said the lawyer, now turning to the bereaved girl, "I wish to say one word before I go."

"Yes, sir."

"This gentleman, Mr. Keene, is one of my associates, and his interest in this affair and in your welfare will not be less than my own. Should the occasion arise, I want you to speak as freely to him as you would to me, and tell him anything you may know. Will you do so?"

"I will, Mr. French, if you tell me to," said Mabel, with a grateful glance in the direction of Sheridan Keene.

"It will be to your advantage, I think," bowed the lawyer. "Have you seen the coroner, Mr. Keene?"

"He is in the parlor," replied the latter, drawing the attorney aside.

"With the constable?"

"Yes," said Keene, lowering his voice to a whisper. "I foresee what is coming, and it may prove all for the best. Let them start an inquest as soon as they wish, and rather expedite it, if it comes in your way to do so."

"Have you discovered anything?"

"I shall discover something," murmured Keene significantly, "but I cannot yet say how. Take care not to observe me too closely, and don't betray my business here."

"Surely not!"

"If a jury is empaneled to-day, and the inquest begun, plan to remain here overnight, and retain me with you."

"I can easily do that."

"Now, I want a few words with this girl alone, so slip away and leave me with her. I'll see you again later."

"Very well."

"One moment, sir! Don't interpose any objection to Bragg's doings!"

"I understand."

The lawyer nodded, then turned to Mabel Jeffrey and said a few low words of encouragement, and presently withdrew from the room.

And Sheridan Keene found himself alone with the girl whose happiness he had resolved, if possible, to restore. But he already knew that the barrier to be removed was a serious one.

"Though words alone give but little comfort in great bereavements, Mrs. Jeffrey, allow me to express at least my sympathy," he said, with grave kindness, as he approached and took a seat by her side. "Mr. French has informed me of some portions of your history, and I quite appreciate your present distress."

His gentle tone instantly won her. She regarded him with tearful eyes, and replied, with tremulous pathos:

"You are very good, sir, to speak so kindly."

"I know all about your estrangement from your father and the causes of it," Keene gravely continued. "I shall be very glad if I can serve you effectively, and very possibly I may yet be able to do so. I would like, however, to ask you a few questions, which, perhaps, may seem to you unwarrantably personal. But I will preface them by saying that I have only your happiness and welfare in view."

"Ah, sir, the assurance given me by dear Mr. French is a sufficient voucher for that," said Mabel, in grateful tones.

"And you will answer my questions?"

"Willingly, sir, under the circumstances."

"You shall have no occasion to regret it," smiled Keene gravely. "Tell me how long you had known Robert Jeffrey when you married him."

"Since childhood, sir."

"And loved him that long?"

"We were always fond of one another, sir," she said simply; and a faint tint of pink now showed in her pale cheeks.

"He has been a kind husband?"

"Very, sir! None can disprove that; nor can man or woman turn me from Bob, or Robert from me. Of that I am sure!"

"I am glad to hear you say so," bowed Keene, smiling at her fervor. "Do you know why your father objected to your marriage?"

"Solely because he had set his mind upon my marrying my cousin, Richard. Father was terribly hard, in his way—but I can forget, now, sir!"

"Of course, of course," nodded Keene. "Yet Mr. Thorpe was willing to marry you, I understand."

"Yes, sir," said Mabel sadly. "That was the one occasion on which I think my cousin unmanly and unkind—for he knew my sentiments."

"Has he generally been interested in your welfare?"

"Save then alone," was the reply. "Yes, Richard has done all he could to reunite me with my father. In that he has been very earnest and manly. I bear him no ill will, sir."

"What effect has your father's antipathy had upon your husband, Mrs. Jeffrey?"

A startled expression crept into the woman's eyes, then slowly faded. The assurance given her in the beginning still held sway.

"Alas, sir!" she replied; "a most unhappy effect. It has made him very gloomy and morose. He has bitterly resented my father's treatment of me, more than of himself; and he also discredits Richard's display of friendship. He has bitterly denounced both of them, and too openly at times, I fear—for he is an honest and plain-spoken man, is Bob Jeffrey, and quick of temper. But, sir," and now she laid her fair hand with touching significance on the detective's arm, "my husband would do no man bodily harm, save in self-defense, or in some righteous cause—of that I am sure!"

Sheridan Keene was a little moved by the look in her pathetic eyes, yet he could answer only:

"Hold fast to your faith in him, then, like a loving and loyal wife, whatever may come."

"I shall do that, sir."

"Now, tell me, has this moodiness led him to indulge in drink to any serious extent?"

"Indeed, sir, no! I never saw Bob the worse for liquor."

"Has he remained away from you nights?"

"Never, sir, since our marriage."

"Where is he to-day?"

"At work in Malden."

"Has he been informed of what has happened here?"

"I have asked that word be sent to him, sir."

"He will probably come as soon as he hears the sad news?"

"Surely, sir."

"Did Mr. Thorpe call on you last evening?"

"Yes, sir—and Mrs. Haynie."

"Was your husband at home?"

"No, sir. He always avoids Richard. My cousin and I waited for him till after eight o'clock, then Richard had to look after his horse."

"Did your husband soon arrive?"

"Not until near midnight, sir."

"Was that unusual?"

"Very, sir! But he said where he had been," Mabel hastened to add. "He was up about the house here, thinking whether it were not best to try to get a word with father in my behalf. But he did not see him, sir—of that I am sure; for I'll not doubt Bob's word!"

"Did you sit up at home for him, Mrs. Jeffrey?"

"Not in the house, sir. I went out with Richard when he left, and went to look for Bob. Not finding him, I became anxious. I stood about near home and walking the street, until he finally came along."

"Ah, yes! Then you both went home?"

"Yes, sir."

"That was about midnight?"

"Precisely, sir. It was just twelve by the clock in our dining room, and we went to bed at once."

"What time did your husband go to work this morning?"

"He left home at six o'clock. He wouldn't allow me to rise that early, as I was up so late last night; and I did not leave my bed until word was brought me of this dreadful event. Then I came up here at once."

"Do you live far from here?"

"About half a mile, sir. I think—— Oh, there's Bob!"

The sound of a voice from the hall had reached both their ears, a voice that was deep and full, and ringing with manly affection.

"In the library, you say? Let me pass, please?"

Mabel Jeffrey had sprung to her feet, and would have approached the door, but something in the tones he had heard led Sheridan Keene to wave her back. He opened the door himself and looked into the hall.

Richard Thorpe, with hand extended, stood confronting a strapping, handsome man in workman's dress, yet in whose pale features and repellent attitude pride and scorn cried out with mutely eloquent effect.

"Mr. Jeffrey," Thorpe was saying, "this is no time for bitterness between you and me! I would not willingly do you a wrong. Will you take my hand?"

"No, sir! I will never take your hand till I know it to be that of a true man!" cried Jeffrey, with terrible sternness. "Let me go to my wife, sir!"

Thorpe instantly stepped aside, and Sheridan Keene admitted Jeffrey to his wife's presence and closed the door.

"Who was that rough fellow?" he asked of Thorpe, as he joined him in the hall.

"An infernal fool, who don't know what's for his own good," said Thorpe, with a shrug of his shoulders. "He is Mabel's husband, and I'd have been his friend, if he'd have let me."

"He acts like a ruffian. Some men are blind to their own interests!" said Keene bluntly.

"You're right in that, Mr. Keene!" replied Thorpe, with immediate approval. "Here is Mr. French."

Sheridan Keene turned as the lawyer approached, and the three entered the parlor. There were more people gathering in and about the house, and the attorney explained:

"Mr. Clark has decided to empanel a jury this afternoon, Mr. Keene," he said. "He is not sure the inquest will begin before morning, however."

"The sooner the better, I think," observed Thorpe. "Delay may prevent our getting at the truth of this affair."

"But there are certain legal proceedings necessary, my dear Richard."

"I presume so, sir. I leave it all to you."

"Can you accommodate Mr. Keene and myself tonight?"

"Certainly, sir."

"You can remain, Mr. Keene?"

"That's for you to say, sir. I suppose the case of Gammon versus Welch can wait my return?"

"Oh, yes; that's not important."

"I can remain, then."

"You can have my chamber, which has a stove," said Thorpe agreeably. "I shall be glad to give it up to you."

"You're very kind," nodded Keene, with manifest appreciation.

Something like a quarter hour later, he observed that Constable Bragg, upon whose movements he was keeping a furtive watch, was leaving the house alone and striking across lots toward a strip of woodland. He decided he would follow and try to ascertain the nature of the constable's mission. His celerity in securing evidence had already impressed the detective.

By constant maneuvering, Keene succeeded in tracking the constable, unobserved, and, at the end of a quarter hour, saw him approach a pretty wooden cottage, which he at once suspected to be that of Bob Jeffrey. The detective dropped behind a wall to watch the constable's movements.

Mr. Bragg was certainly there with a mission of no ordinary importance. He tried the several doors in an attempt to enter, and finally resorted to the windows. With these he was more successful, and presently, finding one he could open, he boldly entered the house.

Keene now found himself at a disadvantage. He suspected Bragg was there in search of something, yet to approach for the purpose of spying was to invite discovery and possibly awaken misgivings.

He waited a full hour, thinking the constable might emerge; then he decided to take the chances. He stole to one of the side windows and looked in.

It was a window of the dining room, and by good luck he caught Mr. Bragg in the very act of searching the sideboard, inside, under, and behind. He already had searched the most of the house. He was so intently occupied, however, that he had no eyes for the opposite window, and Keene watched him, unobserved. But this persistent and methodical search proved vain, until examination was made of a tall old clock in one corner.

From the upper box of this and through one of the hinged panels, which, from either side, gave access to the works, this indefatigable servant of the law extracted a narrow, flat object, which evidently had stopped the movement of the works, since the long pendulum hung motionless.

Detective Keene instantly observed the parcel to be a thin package of documents, tied with a string. Were these the papers for which the house of Jacob Moore had been searched and his desk ravaged?

The detective glanced at the face of the clock.

The hands pointed to twelve.

The very hour at which Bob Jeffrey had returned home the night before!

Sheridan Keene ducked from observation and stole back to the wall.

The hustling constable presently emerged from the window with a bundle under his arm and a look of triumph under his bushy brows, and struck back across lots to the scene of the tragedy.

But Sheridan Keene did not follow him.

For where the work of the constable ended, that of the detective began.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INQUEST.

It was nearly four o'clock when Detective Keene returned to the Moore dwelling, when he found his inference relative to the inquest to be correct. Judge Clark already had empaneled a coroner's jury, and was about issuing summons upon the various persons whose testimony as witnesses was desired. During this latter work, he was constantly in private conference with the busy constable. The day was so far spent, however, that the inquest itself was not to be begun until nine the following morning.

Keene and Lawyer French spent the night at the house, but Robert Jeffrey and his wife returned home. The detective had a brief talk with them before their departure, however, but solely of a conventional character. He was rather favorably impressed with Jeffrey, whose outspoken manner and sturdy Saxon nature were those of a man of genuine worth. Yet he was not without a certain reserve when with friends, which indicated considerable diffidence or bashfulness.

The following day was clear and cold, and long before nine o'clock the hall and lower rooms of the Moore dwelling were thronged with people, the jury, empaneled the previous day, the witnesses who had been summoned, and no end of curious and interested neighbors. The remains of Jacob Moore had been removed to an upper chamber, and the entire ground floor of the house was to serve the requirements of the day.

It was precisely nine o'clock when Judge Clark took his seat at the table at one end of the large parlor, and arranged a place for his stenographer. He was a grave, thin-featured man, with sharp eyes and a dignified air of decision.

The jury occupied chairs at one end of the room, that next to the windows. The witnesses were seated opposite the coroner, with the center of the room vacant, to be used by each in giving the required testimony. A table for several reporters was near the hall door, and the hall itself was thronged with observers.

Just after nine o'clock both Lawyer French and Sheridan Keene entered the room and took seats near the coroner. Both had had a long conference with him that morning, one result of which possibly appeared in his opening words, if any well-informed hearer took notice. Immediately after rapping for order, he said gravely:

"I may deviate a little from the ordinary course in conducting this inquiry, gentlemen of the jury. A crime has been committed, and the object of this inquest is to gather any facts which may shed light upon the case and serve to apprehend the criminal. Truth and justice are what the law aims to sustain, and mere methods to further that end are of secondary importance. Lawyer French, if you desire at any time to question a witness in the interest of the relatives of the deceased, I will give you the privilege."

The attorney bowed.

"If it becomes desirable, judge, my associate, Mr. Keene, will avail himself of your courtesy," he said blandly.

The coroner glanced over the room, then said shortly:

"Doctor Carr, will you take the stand?"

Amid the profound silence, the little physician left his seat among the witnesses and came to the middle of the room. His testimony was a long report of his examination of the remains of the deceased, a rather scientific and pedantic dissertation, as clear as mud to the twelve jurymen; yet it established the fact that Jacob Moore had been killed by violence at the hand of another, which was the first fact necessary to establish. This having been done, Doctor Carr was excused from farther attendance, and allowed to depart about his business.

From the array of witnesses which energetic Mr. Bragg had unearthed, the coroner then selected those best suited to his purpose.

The first was the keeper of the turnpike tavern, a man named Jenks, who testified to the time when both Thorpe and Joe Darbage had come to the tavern on the night of the crime, and the interval they remained there. Jenks further testified that Robert Jeffrey visited his place, occasionally drinking there, and at times using threatening language against both Moore and Richard Thorpe. At one time, in an altercation with Darbage over the character of Thorpe, Jenks further testified that Jeffrey had drawn a knife in the violence of his passion, and that he and Darbage had come to blows.

The effect of all this on the various observers was at once noticeable, for it hinted at the culmination to which the inquest was likely to tend. Mabel Jeffrey grew more than ever pale, and was trembling visibly; but Jeffrey himself, who had a chair by her side, sat as motionless as a man of bronze, with a flush on his cheeks and a subdued fire in the depths of his frowning eyes.

With the retirement of Mr. Jenks, the coroner turned to a corpulent, perturbed-looking woman in middle life, and said quietly:

"As you are the last person known to have seen Moore alive, I next will ask you to testify, Mrs. Haynie. You may sit, if you prefer, Mrs. Haynie."

Sheridan Keene at once arose and placed a chair for her in the middle of the room.

Very much flustrated by instantly becoming the center of attraction, the corpulent lady, with much blushing and coughing, managed at length to take the seat provided.

"What is your name, please?" asked the coroner.

"Margaret Haynie."

"And your residence?"

"I have been housekeeper for Mr. Moore for most twelve years."

"I understand that you were not at home all of Tuesday evening?"

"No, sir; I was not," Mrs. Haynie replied, by degrees recovering her composure.

"At what time did you leave here?"

"It was just seven o'clock."

"Had Mr. Moore retired for the night?"

"He had—leastwise, he was in his chamber. I went through the kitchen to see Mr. Darbage, who was in the stable, and told him I would come back in just an hour."

Mrs. Haynie, encouraged by the sound of her own voice, characteristic of her sex, was now inclined to exercise it.

"Did you do so?" inquired the coroner.

"No, sir. I went to see a sick friend, and carried some catnip; then called on Mabel Jeffrey. I stayed there till eight o'clock."

"You seem quite positive about the hour, Mrs. Haynie."

"So I am, sir," was the ready reply. "I know, because Mr. Richard came in just as I was leaving, and I called Mabel's attention to the dining-room clock."

"Did you leave immediately after Mr. Thorpe came?"

"Yes, sir."

"And returned home?"

"I did."

"How long did it take you?"

"Maybe it were three-quarters of an hour. Being rather fat"—and here Mrs. Haynie blushed profusely—"I did not hurry."

"Did you see any person near here when you were returning?"

Mrs. Haynie hesitated, colored more deeply than ever; and the coroner added:

"In other words, did you meet Mr. Jeffrey?"

"No, sir; I didn't meet Mr. Jeffrey," Mrs. Haynie faltered tremulously.

None of this escaped the eye of her questioner, who now said, a little sharply:

"Did you see him at all? This is not a matter for equivocation?"

"Yes, I did," explained Mrs. Haynie, turning white under the rebuke.

"Where was he?"

"He was walking in the grounds, out beyond the stable."

"Did you speak to him?"

"No, sir. He was gone in a jiffy."

"Did you come directly to the house?"

"I did, sir, and sat down in the kitchen to rest till the clock struck nine. I know the time, sir, because I counted."

"Did you see anything of Mr. Darbage?"

"No, sir, I didn't. He was not in the stable. I went up to the library and fixed the lamp for Mr. Richard, when he should return."

"Did you go to Moore's chamber?'

"Yes, sir, I did."

"For what purpose?"

"I saw his door was ajar, and I went to close it."

The coroner sat in silent thought for several moments, while his every hearer waited with intense interest for his next words.

"Had you a lamp, Mrs. Haynie?" he asked, at length.

"I had one in my hand, sir, but I placed it on the stairs when I went down the hall."

"Did you enter Moore's room?"

"I stepped just over the threshold, to see if the fire was right."

"Did you find it so?"

"Yes, sir. Joe—that's Darbage—he had fixed it."

"Did Moore speak to you, Mrs. Haynie?"

"No, sir. He was fast asleep."

"Then you could see him, could you?"

"La! yes, sir. It was bright moonlight. I am sure he was asleep, for I stayed only for a moment, lest I should wake him. Then I made sure to fasten the latch of the door, which is damaged; for an old man like him oughtn't to sleep in a draft."

"Is the latch of the door so damaged, Mrs. Haynie, that the door comes ajar unless secured with considerable care?"

"Yes, sir; that's the very trouble. That's most likely why it came ajar after Joe—that's Darbage, sir—closed it."

The coroner drew himself up in his chair, and settled his collar and tie.

"Mrs. Haynie," he asked, with his voice involuntarily betraying a quickening mental action, "at what time did you arise next morning?"

"About seven o'clock, sir."

"Did you go to Moore's room?"

"I did, sir. I went to fix his fire," stammered Mrs. Haynie, beginning to grow pale at her recollection of the picture that there had met her gaze.

"Did you find the door latched, as you had left it?"

"I did, sir; just the same," cried the witness decidedly.

"Could you tell if Moore had changed his position during the night?"

"Lord, sir!"—and Mrs. Haynie's teeth chattered—"I didn't see nothing but blood and gore and those staring eyes."

"That will do, Mrs. Haynie," interposed the coroner, and he signified, with a wave of his hand, that he had finished questioning her.

In her chair, at the opposite side of the room, Mabel Jeffrey sat, with the last vestige of color gone from her girlish face.

As Mrs. Haynie started to rise from her chair, Detective Keene leaned forward in his, and gravely interposed:

"One moment, Mrs. Haynie, if you please," he said politely. "I would like to ask you a question."

"Yes, sir," assented the woman, in rather timid tones.

"You say it was exactly eight o'clock when you left Mrs. Jeffrey's cottage that evening? Are you sure that the clock was going?"

"Yes, sir, I am," replied the witness; "for I had no other means of noting the time, and I remarked to Mabel, when I left, that I had been there half an hour."

"Thank you," nodded Keene indifferently. "Now, you say you had no lamp when you entered Moore's room before retiring. How were you able to see him?"

"Only by the moonlight, sir. It was a very bright night, and one of the curtains was raised."

"Could you swear, Mrs. Haynie, that Moore was not dead at that very moment?"

"Lord, sir, no!" cried Mrs. Haynie, with more confusion than she had yet betrayed. "If you keep asking me questions, sir, I shall get where I can't swear to anything."

"Very well, Mrs. Haynie," laughed Sheridan Keene. "In that case, I will stop immediately."

A murmur of rising excitement ran round the room when Sheridan Keene interposed his questions, and even Richard Thorpe leaned forward with quickening interest; but the apparent indifference with which the detective terminated his inquiries, and the laugh with which he accepted Mrs. Haynie's final response, served to dispel from most minds the idea that he had been actuated by any hidden motive. Furtive glances between a few, nevertheless, indicated that a suspicion had arisen of something under the surface.

As Keene settled back in his chair, still smiling, as if amused, and corpulent Mrs. Haynie waddled back to her seat in the row of witnesses, Judge Clark said a few subdued words to his stenographer, and then resumed the inquiry.

"I next would like your testimony, Mr. Thorpe," he said, with a glance in the latter's direction.

Richard Thorpe immediately arose and came forward, till the full glare of light from the window fell upon him. If he was rather pale, it was but natural under the trying circumstances; and he was certainly very self-possessed, and met the coroner's gaze with no sign of perturbation.

For the first time since the inquiry, Bob Jeffrey betrayed noticeable interest. He drew up his powerful figure higher in his chair, and the hands resting on his hips were tightly clenched. His wife observed, and significantly laid her fair hand upon his arm, at which he nodded slightly; but his frowning blue eyes never for an instant left the face and figure of the man standing on the floor.

"What is your full name, Mr. Thorpe?" began the coroner.

Without a tremor in his voice, though he well knew that some there might think him the heir to Jacob Moore's thousands, the witness answered:

"Richard Gaylord Thorpe."

"You are a nephew of the deceased?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your vocation?"

"I have a brokerage business in Boston."

"Do you reside there a part of the time?"

"Yes, sir; I keep rooms in Appleton Street."

"Do you consider your home there?"

"No, sir; I was reared in this house, and consider it my home."

"And you are here a portion of the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you travel between here and Boston by train mostly?"

"In bad weather I do. At other times I usually ride my horse, which I keep for enjoyment and exercise."

"A saddle horse, I take it?"

"Yes, sir."

"When here, do you usually pass your nights in this house?"

"As a general thing, yes," Thorpe answered, with a nod. "Sometimes, however, I remain overnight at the turnpike tavern."

"How about last Tuesday night, that on which your uncle was killed?" asked the coroner, with scarce a change in his monotonous intonation.

"I was at the tavern."

"At what time did you leave here?"

"About seven o'clock."

"Did you go at once to the tavern, Mr. Thorpe?"

"I did not."

"Where else?"

"I rode up toward Malden, sir, then swung across to Revere till I struck the turnpike, and thence to the tavern, where I left my horse while I called upon my cousin, Mrs. Jeffrey."

"How long a ride would you call that, Mr. Thorpe?" asked the coroner, with some display of indifference.

"Between five and six miles, I should say."

"After leaving your horse at the tavern, did you go directly to your cousin's house?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Arriving there, about what time, please?"

"About eight o'clock, as Mrs. Haynie has testified."

"How long did you remain there, Mr. Thorpe?"

"About half an hour, sir."

"Did you leave there before or after Mrs. Haynie?"

"After, sir. I sat with Mrs. Jeffrey in the sitting room, waiting for her husband to come in; and about half past eight we both went out upon the street. I left Mrs. Jeffrey at her gate, and returned to the tavern."

"What did you do there?"

"I found a card game in progress, and took a hand."

"How long were you so engaged?"

"Until I heard the clock strike twelve," replied Thorpe, who now looked as if he didn't quite see why he should be questioned so closely. "I was then about to return home, when I was told that it had grown very cold out of doors."

"Well?"

"Well, what, sir? Am I to understand that you wish to know my every movement?" demanded Thorpe, with a slight frown.

The coroner did not resent his umbrage.

"You are to understand, Mr. Thorpe, that you are an heir presumptive of the deceased, which makes your testimony very desirable," he replied quietly. "You may decline to answer any of my questions, if you have any reason for so doing."

Thorpe colored deeply, and hastened to exclaim:

"I beg your pardon, judge! I had overlooked the fact of my relationship. I will answer any questions that you may ask."

For a moment, Thorpe's attitude had created a vague suspicion in many minds; but it was instantly dissipated by his immediate and gentlemanly change. Even the coroner bowed a grave acknowledgment.

"Well, then, Mr. Thorpe," he continued quietly, "how were you influenced by the fact that it had become very cold during your stay at the tavern?"

"I was led to remain there until morning, sir. My horse had not previously been out of her stable for a week. I thought it unsafe to expose her to the sudden change. I did not wish to walk home, moreover, so I remained where I was."

"You might as well have stated that without demurring," smiled the judge.

"I regret my mistake," Thorpe again observed, "and hope you will not misinterpret it."

"No, surely not! You remained at the tavern, then, until morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was Joe Darbage in your company?"

"I did not see Joe Darbage, sir."

"Do you know if the deceased has been in the habit of keeping large sums of money in the house?"

"He has not, sir, in so far as I know."

"Upon what terms have you lived with him?"

"Our relations have been amicable."

"When did you last see him alive, Mr. Thorpe?"

"When I mounted my horse Tuesday evening I rode out of the stable. He then was standing at the window of his room, in which a lamp was burning. He was about retiring to bed."

"Did he usually retire so early?"

"Yes, sir. His health has lately been poor."

"Do you know if he has executed a will, Mr. Thorpe?"

"Most assuredly I do not!" was the emphatic rejoinder.

"That is all at present, Mr. Thorpe," said the coroner. Then he glanced at Sheridan Keene; but Keene was gazing with thoughtful eyes at the intricate figure in the carpet covering the floor.

Mr. Thorpe bowed himself back to his seat, and within a minute had resumed his complacent indifference.

The frown on the face of Bob Jeffrey, however, had steadily deepened.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOE DARBAGE.

Though it already was approaching noon, Judge Clark did not call a recess. Evidently he was following a plan previously laid out in his mind, for, without a moment's hesitation, he said sharply:

"Mr. Darbage will now take the stand."

There was a craning of necks in the hall when the groom came forward. Such scenes, though for the most part quietly conducted, involve such terrible results that an undercurrent of excitement pervades the proceedings from the very beginning, and becomes the stronger and more intense as the inquiry progresses. There were pale faces among the crowd and eyes eager to see; yet scarce a sound rose from all the throng, so intent were all to lose no part of the testimony evoked.

The witness called came forward from a corner of the room and took the position that Richard Thorpe had vacated. He still was roughly clad, with his pants tucked in at the top of his cowhide boots. His face was grim, his brows knit, his eyes glittering brightly; but the steady gaze of so many curious people had no perceptible effect upon him until he chanced to catch a piercing glance from the eyes of Sheridan Keene, when he flushed slightly.

"What is your name?" demanded the coroner.

"Darbage," was the reply; and the speaker cleared his throat with a hoarse cough, and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"Your full name?" said the coroner.

"My front name's Joseph—Joe, for short."

"Your birthplace?"

"Couldn't say, sir," growled Darbage, steadily eying his questioner from under his brows.

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Darbage, that you don't know where you were born?" Judge Clark demanded sharply.

"That's just what I mean, sir," Darbage nodded, unabashed. "But 'twas somewhere about Liverpool, I reckon. That's the first place I remember of!"

"Who were your parents?"

"I don't know I ever had any—leastwise, I never seen 'em."

A slight smile crossed the faces of some, and the jurors took occasion to twist uneasily in their seats; but the expression of grim decorum on the face of Mr. Darbage did not alter in the least.

The coroner frowned slightly, and his voice hardened.

"What is your occupation?" he asked, after a brief pause.

"Just now I'm a stableman, and do odd work about here, sir."

"How long have you occupied your present place?"

"'Bout a year."

"Don't you know when you came here?"

"I can't say exact. I've no head for dates."

"What was your previous employment?"

"I didn't have any. I picked up an odd job now and then, and when 'twas gone I looked up another. I reckon I've been knocked about as much as any."

"So it appears!" observed the judge, with rather dry austerity. "Where were you located, Mr. Darbage, before you came here?"

"Round Boston and New York, at times."

"Your information doesn't give one a very definite idea of yourself or your past, Mr. Darbage."

"My own idea ain't overdefinite, please you," replied Darbage, with a furtive glance of his gray eyes.

"What led you to come out this way?"

"I was thinking a change might do me good, so I reckoned I'd come. I s'pose a man has a right to go where he likes, sir."

"You may suppose what you please, providing you keep your suppositions to yourself, and answer my questions," said Judge Clark sternly. "Where did you first go, when you arrived in these parts?"

"I knocked about the turnpike tavern for a week or two, till I brought up here," said Mr. Darbage, with his grim composure unruffled by the coroner's sharp rebuke.

"What were you doing at the tavern?"

"Looking for a job, sir."

"Were you employed there?"

"No, sir."

"Then you were supplied with money at that time, were you?"

The brows of the grim witness drew closer, and he hesitated for a moment, then answered:

"I had a little."

"Where did you get it, Mr. Darbage?"

"'Twas some I found in the street."

"Ah, you were very fortunate! Then you found sufficient money to pay your way at the tavern for a week or two before coming to work here—is that it?"

"I reckon that's about the size of it, sir. The other hostler here——"

"Never mind about the other hostler, Mr. Darbage!" interrupted the coroner curtly.

At this moment, Constable Bragg entered the room, bringing with him the refreshing chill of the wintry air outside. He bore a small parcel wrapped in paper, which he handed to the coroner, at the same time whispering a few words in his ear. Judge Clark put the parcel in the table drawer, but his grave countenance underwent no change.

"On Tuesday evening, Mr. Darbage," he continued, "where were you?"

"'Bout what time, sir?" returned Darbage sententiously.

"From the time you saddled Mr. Thorpe's horse until morning."

"Here, about the house, and at the tavern."

"At what time did you leave here?"

"Can't say exact, sir. 'Tween eight and nine."

"You have no head for time, either, it appears."

"Not overmuch, I reckon," admitted Darbage, with a grim smile.

"Perhaps you have a better head for other things. Which way did you go from here?"

"The shortest; across the meadows."

"What occasioned your visit to the tavern that night?"

"I went to see one o' the girls there."

"Was she expecting you?"

"I reckon she was. I'd told her I'd come."

"How long before you left here did you last see the deceased?"

"'Bout five minutes. I went to his room to put a log on the fire, and I saw him in bed."

"Did he speak to you?"

"He did. He said the room was warm enough. I told him it were getting cold out, and he said for me to do as I pleased."

Sheridan Keene added a note to several memoranda upon a slip of paper which he held in the palm of his hand.

"What did you do next?" continued the coroner.

"Went to my room and changed my coat and then went to the tavern."

"Did you close the door of Moore's chamber?"

"Yes, sir."

"And latch it?"

"Couldn't say for sure, sir. I thought I did."

"You then were alone in the house with him?"

"Yes, sir. Mrs. Haynie had gone out."

"Did you see anybody about the grounds?"

"Mr. Jeffrey came to the door, but he didn't get in."

"Where were you when he came?"

"Just leaving my room. I heard some one try the front door, which was bolted, and I hurried down and saw him on the steps."

"Did you open the door.

"I did, and told him I reckoned he'd have to come again."

"Did he say what he wanted?"

"He said he wanted to see Mr. Moore. I told him he was in bed, and then he went away."

"Did you notice which way he went?"

"I watched him till he went down the walk toward the road."

"Why did you delay to watch him, Mr. Darbage, when you knew your lady at the tavern was waiting for you?"

The question, coming sharply from the coroner, caused Mr. Darbage some little discomfiture, the first he had betrayed; yet he replied quite readily:

"Only to see where he was going, sir. Just then my lady was less to me than my curiosity."

"Very evidently! Had Mrs. Haynie returned when you left?"

"No, sir."

"About what time did you reach the tavern?"

"'Bout nine o'clock."

"And remained there till morning?"

"Oh, no, sir; 'twas scarcely past one o'clock when I left."

"You seem to remember that hour well enough, don't you? That is all, Mr. Darbage."

And Mr. Darbage, apparently wholly indifferent, walked out of the room and repaired to the stable and to his pipe.

Hardly a person present but expected Robert Jeffrey would immediately be called to the stand, but the coroner at once adjourned the inquest until two in the afternoon.

As he was about to rise, Constable Jim Bragg leaned over and whispered a few words, to which he replied:

"I do not think the arrest is necessary at present. Jeffrey doesn't appear like a man about to run away. Leave it till the inquest is ended."

TO BE CONTINUED.

WHY COAL HEAPS ARE WHITEWASHED.

The big heaps of coal stored beside the railways are always whitewashed for this reason: The air is fouled in our big towns with the smoke from millions of fires; the smoke is full of powerful gases, which would be deadly, but that the rain sweeps the atmosphere like a broom. The raindrops which have swept the air clean become dirty with the chemical gases. This chemical rain cuts iron and wears it away, cuts buildings, loosening flakes of stone, which fall away, gets into the cracks of the coal and breaks it all up into dust. The only way to save the exposed coal is to cover it with whitewash. Then the rain washes away the whitewash, sealing the cracks in the coal with lime. The rain must wash away the lime before it gets at the coal. So a coating of whitewash is like a sheltering roof, very cheap, and easy to use.

Apart from that, the coal heap, otherwise an eyesore, becomes neat, even attractive, like iced cake.

There is still another reason: A thief might steal whole layers of coal at night, and one would not notice the difference. But the thief who meddles with a limewashed coal heap can never succeed in hiding the marks of his depredations.

BLIND SWIMMERS.

Just as some professional singers with magnificent voices never learn to sing in perfect tune, so do the trainers of really fine swimmers often find it impossible that men, with every quality for racing otherwise, can be made or taught to swim even in an approximately straight line.

Many a splendid swimmer is beaten on this account, for his inveterate habit of getting off his course naturally gives him a roundabout journey. But the remarkable fact remains that blind swimmers—of whom there are in this country a very considerable number in connection with various institutions for persons so afflicted—universally and without exception swim with marvellous directness; indeed, in as perfectly straight a line as is humanly possible, even when the distance covered is very considerable.

So much is this the case, that Doctor Campbell, of the College for the Blind, at Upper Norwood, who particularly interests himself in the physical education of the blind, and has noticed this curious fact, recommends that swimmers who persistently foul each other on any course should practice experimentally when blindfolded.

Blind swimmers can, it appears, on hearing a noise in any given direction, not only swim absolutely straight to the point whence the noise proceeds, but when left to themselves their steering is just as accurate.

EYES IN THE BACKS OF THEIR HEADS.

"Hindsight" is better than foresight in some contingencies, and a man who appreciates that fact has laid the foundation of a modest fortune in securing a patent upon a novel little device which supplies "hindsight" to the people who need it most.

"A post-visual reflector" is what the inventor calls his new invention. It is an arrangement of adjusted mirrors, which enables the wearer to see everything occurring within a certain range behind his back without turning his head.

The post-visual reflector will be useful to jockeys, drivers, rowers, and cyclists.

For jockeys, this appliance is fastened to the bows of a pair of big spectacles, fitted with clear glasses of no magnifying power. The glasses are intended as mudguards, to protect the eyes from the dirt thrown up by the horses' flying feet. The little reflectors are fastened above the glasses, and set at an angle which brings the full width of a race track for a distance of one hundred yards within clear range of vision.

For rowers and bicyclists the post-visual reflector is as valuable as it is to horsemen.

Rowers and cyclists do not need the mudguards, and for them a second patent provides for the adjustment of the reflectors to a light head band, which holds them in exact relative position to the eye, no matter at what angle the head of the wearer may be turned.

A MIGNONETTE TREE.

For those who like sweet-smelling flowers, the following tip should prove useful: A mignonette tree is formed by training a vigorous plant of common mignonette for about three years. Sow the seed in April, thin out to a single plant; next autumn remove all the lower shoots and shape the plant; somewhat later shift into a large pot. Keep it in a warm window and in a growing state, carefully removing all flowers in the spring. It will appear woody. Treat in the same manner next year, removing all branches, except those that are to form the head of the tree. By the third year it will have bark on its trunk, and form a handsome shrub; and by stopping the flowers as they appear during the summer and autumn, it may be made to blossom freely during winter and spring for many years in succession.

If you want to do another really remarkable thing, get a handful of lettuce seeds and soak them overnight in alcohol. Then take a flower pot or box about six inches deep. In the bottom strew two inches of well-mixed loam of florist's soil. Then take your soaked seeds, and, after putting two more inches of soil in the box, composed of one part loam and one part quicklime, scatter the lettuce seeds all over the top. Sift a little more very fine loam over them. Water the whole, and stand it directly in the light—a strong light—gas, if possible.

In ten minutes the seeds burst, in twenty there are two leaves, and at the end of an hour, if sprinkled a couple of times, the lettuce leaves will have attained the size of half a crown, and will be found, if served at table, freshly crisp.

GLEANINGS FOR THE CURIOUS.

Arctic animals turn white every winter.

There are four thousand five hundred woman printers in England.

Unvaccinated persons are not permitted to vote in Norway.

A lady's foot should equal in length one-seventh of her height.

Physicians' carriages have the right of way in the streets of Berlin.

The game of billiards was introduced into Europe by the Knights Templars.

Would-be Columbuses will be glad to learn that one-tenth of the world is still unexplored.

Of every one thousand sailors eighty-four have rheumatism every year.

The Prussian government earns five million pounds a year through lotteries; the Italian government about three million pounds.

More women than men go blind in Sweden, Norway, and Iceland; more men than women in the rest of Europe.

Fried wasps and bird-nest soup are considered great delicacies in China. It is stated that they are quite an acquired taste.

QUEEN BESS AS EDITRESS.

It is to England, as represented by Queen Elizabeth, that the honor of commencing printed sheets of public intelligence is to be ascribed. When the Spanish Armada threatened an invasion of England, good Queen Bess resolved to inform her people of the impending dangers. She began to publish, from time to time, a sheet bearing the following title: "The *English Mercurie,* published by authoritie for the contradiction of false reports." Of this publication three copies are preserved in the British Museum, the earliest, No. 50, being dated the twenty-third of July, 1688.

The first article, dated from Whitehall, contains advices from Sir Francis Walsingham that the Armada was seen in the Channel, making for the entrance with a favorable gale. An account is then given of her majesty's fleet, which consisted of eighty sail, commanded by the lord high admiral, in the *Ark Royal,* Sir Francis Drake, and Admirals Hawkins and Frobisher. Under the head, "London," there is an account of an interview which the mayor and corporation had on the previous day with her majesty, for the purpose of assuring her of their resolution to stand by her to the last.

Under the same head appears the following paragraph: "Yesterday the Scotch ambassador had a private audience of her majestie, and delivered a letter containing the most cordial assurances of adhering to her majestie's interests, and to those of the Protestant religion, and the younge king, James VIth, said to her majestie's ministers at his court that all the favor he expected of the Spaniards was the courtesie of Polyphemus to Ulysses, that he should be devoured last."

MODEL FISH MARKET.

Copenhagen has a model fish market, built by the municipality. With the exception of the larger varieties, like cod and halibut, all the fish are kept alive in tesselated tanks filled with running water. There is no other town where all the fish, whether cheap or dear, are so beautifully fresh. In the harbor there are a large number of wooden boats pierced with holes and filled with fish. These boats just float on the surface of the water, and the living fish are taken out of them when wanted. But as every one can not go to the water's edge to buy fish, there are water tanks on wheels, and the live fish are brought to the doors of the people's houses.

ORIGIN OF ALMANAC.

The origin of the word "almanac" comes from "the moon," for in remote times our forefathers engraved the courses of the moon on wooden cubes, which were known as "al monaght," which signified "all the moon." The first almanac appeared in China, and was the work of a Jesuit. The original of the word, as it appears in French, Italian, and Spanish, was almanakh.

THE LENGTH OF SMILES.

Taken on an average, a woman's mouth stretches half an inch temporarily each time she smiles. Allowing her only thirty-six smiles a day, her smile capacity for twenty-four hours would reach half a yard, that is about one hundred and eight-two yards per annum.

A more cheerful woman or a girl with a new hat smiles at the rate of a yard a day, or getting on for a quarter of a mile a year.

As for the funny man who laughs at his own jokes, the length of his grin is past calculation.

VISITING STORY-TELLERS.

Professional story-tellers roam from house to house in Japan, to spin their yarns. In the city of Tokyo there are about six hundred of these professional romancers. Their pay averages twenty cents an hour. When the story-teller discovers that his romances are becoming dull from frequent repetition, he chooses a new district.

GRAFTING WORTH WHILE.

The bone of a sheep was transferred to the arm of a patient at the Charity Hospital, New Orleans. The forearm of the patient undergoing the novel operation had been shattered by the discharge of a gun. The operation was pronounced successful.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Try Case to See if the Turkey is an Animal.

Quite an interesting case presented itself to the city court of Swainsboro, Ga., recently, when the question arose as to whether or not a turkey hen was a domestic animal. Will Bryant, of a country district, was accused by one of his neighbors of having shot fatally a certain turkey hen, and that on account of this he was guilty of the charge of cruelty to animals, same to be threshed out in the courts of the county.

The prosecutor, Abe Batts, charged that Bryant shot the turkey hen with a shotgun, and that the shot was of such a nature as to actually produce death before the wounded turkey could be carried to a near-by house. Just as soon as the wound was inflicted, the owner of the turkey, Batts, hurried it to the house, where it soon expired.

The defendant's lawyer, W. F. Grey, naturally contended that said victim did not come under the head of domestic animals, the penalty for cruelty to which is prescribed by the code of Georgia. The solicitor, Mr. Bradley, hesitatingly contended that it did, thus an argument ensued. The jury was for the time being sequestrated, and the legal battle began.

After a very short time on the floor of the court, the solicitor and his numerous authorities were overriden by the court, and the defendant's attorney, and the turkey hen declared not a domestic animal. Hence the charge that Will Bryant, erstwhile criminal, was groundless.

The jury was then permitted to return, and the court directed the attorney for the defense to write a verdict of not guilty for the jury. Thus, in a very short space of time, this most important question, whether or not a turkey hen is a domestic animal, has been settled by a Georgia court, and for all time, we will understand that the turkey hen is just a common varmint, and not subject to the law of cruelty to animals.

Horse Eats a Fifty-dollar Bill.

Ben Bonda, a farmer near Spirit Lake, Iowa, has a horse that is worth $50 at least. The story follows: Mr. Bonda was celebrating his seventieth birthday. His son, Ben, junior, planned to give him a $50 bill. Ben gave the bank note to a sister to give to the elder man. The girl, thinking to surprise her father, went to the barn, where he was, and put the money on a stairway leading to the loft, expecting that Mr. Bonda would find it when he came down. The family horse, though, spoiled the girl's plan. She had just turned away when the animal observed the greenback, and, probably believing it a choice morsel, ate it.

New Spelling Campaign in England.

A campaign in favor of spelling reform is to be conducted in London and the provinces this winter.

Mr. William Archer, under the auspices of the Simplified Spelling Society, is to conduct a lecturing tour on his return from the East, and lectures will also be delivered by many other well-known men throughout the country.

The lectures will advocate the reform of what they regard as the present "chaotic spelling," which they declare is so remote from pronunciation that it is no guide to the English language at all, and tends to degrade our speech.

The society desires to fix a standard of pronunciation of the English language throughout the empire.

It has been stated that the English people over seas, particularly in Australia and South Africa, are deviating so seriously from the general standard of speech prevailing in the mother country that the time might come when visitors from these parts of the empire might fail to make themselves understood in London!

Mr. Tate, director of education in Melbourne, has suggested several spelling reforms to which effect has been given in the official papers issued by his department. Discussions have taken place and the council of public education in Melbourne is addressing a letter to the president of the board of education in London urging upon him, in the interest of education, the necessity of a general adoption of a simplified reform of spelling.

Many French Women Hold Government Jobs.

If the young Frenchman no longer wishes to become a functionary, his sister does. In its earlier days, years ago, the republican government employed 10,000 women. To-day it employs over 155,000. It is a veritable invasion. The detailed statistics are interesting and curious.

The ministry of public instruction counts, naturally enough, the largest number of women employees, 10,000. Next comes the ministry of public works, with 25,000, which includes the women employed in the post offices, while 15,000 women are employed by the ministry of finance, mainly in the tobacco factories of the state. At the foot of the list comes the ministry of agriculture, which employs sixteen young ladies—in what precise capacity it is not stated. The ministry of war has nearly 4,000 amazons in its employ, and 210 Portias serve the ends of justice.

In the department of higher education the greatest feminist conquests have been won. Madame Curie, of course, occupies the chair of physics at the Sarbonne, and Mademoiselle Barbier is assistant professor of chemistry of Grenoble.

Alabama Girl Claims Corn-growing Record.

Miss Pauline May, of Notasulga, Macon County, Ala., will probably be the 1912 champion woman corn grower. She filed a report with the State department of agriculture which certifies that she produced 114 bushels of 51 pounds of corn on one acre of land.

Miss May is a young girl, not above her teens. She values the corn at $1 per bushel. Its production cost 26 cents a bushel, according to her estimate, which leaves 74 cents a bushel profit. No other Macon County farmer's record equals this.

In making the record yield, the young woman plowed twelve inches deep, applied 750 pounds of commercial fertilizer and a small amount of manure. She then planted Mosby prolific corn. The department of agriculture believes no other woman's record will equal the one made by Miss May.

Blind Complain at Railroad Double Fare.

The Blind Men's Working Home, of Philadelphia, has just sent to the State railroad commission a complaint of a most unusual character. It is directed against the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and protests against its ruling which requires blind people to be accompanied by a guide, in this way doubling the expense of traveling.

The complainants declare that many of them will be unable to visit their homes if this ruling is enforced, and they think it unnecessary and unjust. They point out that in entering and leaving the trains they can always get volunteer assistance from other travelers.

British Officer Throws Side Lights on Value of Air Crafts in Battle.

Colonel H. S. Massy, of the Aërial League of England, discussing the possibility of aëroplanes taking part in actual warfare in addition to undertaking scouting work, said:

"It is evident that to obtain the necessary information one side must sweep the air clear of all opposing machines or as many as possible of them. Fighting aëroplanes should be equipped with a light, quick-firing gun fixed in front of the machine, while the observing officer should carry or have handy a magazine rifle, but this might necessitate a total crew of three persons.

"There will probably be several kinds of military aëroplanes, just as there are several kinds of naval craft, the light aëroplane for rapid scouting and a heavier machine for helping to clear the air when the lighter machines receive such opposition that they can proceed no farther.

"The larger war planes may eventually carry a pilot and three fighting men. The smaller ones will consist only of a pilot and one observing officer.

"Owing to the difficulty in experimenting with long-range guns, under actual war conditions, it is difficult to say what the effect of high-angle fire would be on an aëroplane flying at sixty or seventy miles an hour. It is possible, however, that shells containing high explosives and leaving a train of smoke behind them to assist the gunner's aim may prove very destructive to air craft, even while flying at a height of 5,000 feet or more.

"Whether the German dirigible *Hansa* could have blown the British warship in Copenhagen harbor to pieces, I don't know. What particular scientific instrument the German dirigibles will carry in order to enable them to drop projectiles with precision on stationary or moving objects, I cannot say, but that such instruments exist is beyond doubt.

"I do not think that at the present time an explosive, unless the charge be an enormous one, dropped on a ship would produce such disastrous effects as some persons anticipate. It is certain, however, that a very lucky shot dropped down a funnel or into a hatchway in the vicinity of the magazine might disable a warship.

"Seeing, however, that a height of over 10,000 feet has lately been attained by an aëroplane, and that the limit of convenient height attainable by the Zeppelins is only about 5,000 feet, it will be easily seen that an aëroplane provided with a dozen small bombs and a quick-firing gun with explosive bullets would make short work of the airship.

"The work of our military airmen during the late British maneuvers most decisively proves that our military pilots and their observing officers are up to the highest foreign standard. The reports of the reconnoitering officers are models of what such documents should be, and have been of immense use to the army commanders.

"All we now lack is numbers, and this defect, I have no doubt, will soon be rectified by the action of our war office. The advent of air craft and the experience we have gained in the maneuvers will bring forward more prominently than ever the question of universal military service.

"Aided by the aërial forces even now at their disposal, it would not be difficult for an enemy to land wherever he pleased, provided that he had a sufficiently powerful naval fleet to defeat or 'hypnotize' our own."

Young Edison Hopes to Find a Substitute for Coal.

Charles Edison, 22 years old, son of Thomas A. Edison, the inventor, is in his fourth year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, fitting himself, he says, to go into his father's laboratory and carry on the work which the latter is doing for the public.

"I only want to be able to accomplish something that will benefit the public," says young Edison. "If I do that, I will be satisfied. My great aim, it seems to me now, will be to discover some substitute for coal, which fifty or a hundred years from now undoubtedly will be beyond the reach of working classes. To find that substitute, which may be hidden now in some cheap byproduct, will be my hobby."

He says his father regards the electric light as his greatest discovery.

Favors Student Voting.

Replying to a letter received from Edward F. Graham, of Ithaca, asking for his views on the subject of "student voting," Attorney General Carmody says he is "in favor of an amendment to the State constitution, permitting students to vote at their respective colleges or other institutions of learning."

"This right," continues the letter, "should include not only the right to vote for all State officers, but also the right to vote upon all propositions, including amendments to the constitution, submitted to the people of the whole State.

"I am in favor of this proposition for two reasons: First, students are quite as well qualified to understand the merits of public questions of candidates and of platforms as any portion of the electorate; second, the opportunity of voting would be an incentive to the study of public affairs, and result in a general elevation of contemporary political knowledge.

"The student, by constitutional amendment, should be given the same rights as are given any elector who is in the actual military or naval service of the State or the United States."

Mr. Carmody points out that under the provisions of section 1 of article 2 of the State constitution, the legislature has made provision for the casting and counting of the votes of an elector who is in the actual military service of the State or the United States, and says that "analogous provisions might be enacted permitting students residents of this State to vote for all national and State candidates and for all propositions submitted to the people of the whole State to have such vote cast at the college under proper legal restrictions and returned to and canvassed in the election district in which the student resides."

To Build New Hospital for Animals.

Announcement was made recently at the offices of the New York Women's League for Animals that it had been decided to establish a hospital where ailing animals of all kinds would be treated and kept until healed. The site selected is at the corner of Bond and Lafayette Streets, and it is expected work will be commenced before Christmas. The plans for the building will be drawn on the lines of similar institutions for dumb animals that have been inspected by Mrs. James Speyer, president of the league, who returned from Europe recently with Miss Ella Mabel Clark, first vice president, and Mrs. C. C. Cuyler, second vice president.

Mrs. Speyer said that she had gained useful information abroad and that the best methods of foreign societies would be employed in the erection and operation of the New York Hospital. An annual parade of work horses and the opening of a free clinic and dispensary for animals at 325 Lafayette Street were the first accomplishments of the league, she explained, and now the hospital would follow.

Tommie Conneff, Famous Runner, Dead.

Sergeant Thomas P. Conneff, an American long-distance runner of world-wide celebrity in the nineties, was found dead recently at Pasig, seven miles east of Manila. His death was apparently accidental.

After his running career was over, Conneff joined the army, and had since obtained the rank of sergeant in the Seventh Cavalry.

Foxes Take Long Journey.

A remarkable trip has been taken by two foxes which are now at the farm of Alfred Hare, of Tees, Alberta. They are fine specimens of the black and red species, and together are valued at about $1,000. They were brought from the region of Lake Athabasca, about 1,000 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta, by Mr. Hare, Professor Burwash, of the University of Chicago, and A. W. Haigh, a guide, who spent four months at the lake while Professor Burwash was making scientific studies.

While the party was at Great Bear Lake, on the return journey, Indian trappers caught the red fox, and, as it was not injured, Mr. Hare bought it and decided to bring it back. One hundred miles nearer home, in the Fond du Lac region, the black fox was also picked up from Indians. Mr. Hare paid $350 for the two, and decided it would be worth while to bring them back to see if black foxes could be bred for the fur market.

More than 900 miles through the northwest wilderness were covered by canoe and packing before the railroad was reached. The foxes proved to be a heavy burden and care to the party, but they were brought to Athabasca, a railroad station ninety-eight miles north of Tees, in good condition. They are now thriving in their quarters on Mr. Hare's farm.

Meteor Alarms Population.

The inhabitants of Troyes, France, and the adjacent district were greatly alarmed by the passage over the town of a meteor of extraordinary brilliancy.

At one moment, when the meteor appeared to be approaching the earth, there was a loud detonation, followed by a sudden stream of light of such intensity as to be terrifying.

A loud subterranean rumbling was then heard, causing doors and windows to rattle and shake noisily. The inhabitants, panic-stricken, rushed out of their houses, and some time elapsed ere calm was restored.

Travels of a Globe-trotting Boy Ended.

Theodore Nachinson, 15 years old, who ran away from Public School No. 23, and his home at 356 Grand Street, Paterson, N. J., early last June, had traveled 5,000 miles on land and water, and was still going when he was caught in the Panama Canal Zone. He was brought back to this country recently by the captain of the Panama liner *Allianca,* in whose custody he was put by the Red Cross Society at Colon. Nachinson took the name of Nash when he departed from his home, and crossed the continent by stealing rides beneath baggage cars. He ventured into Mexico, but was forced to return because of the fighting there. He greeted the agents of the children's society, Cunningham and Pisara, who met him when the *Allianca* arrived, with a smile.

"They had to go some to get me," he said, as he shook hands with the agents. The boy admitted he wasn't quite sure he wouldn't run away again if he had the chance, so he was taken to the children's court. There Judge Mayo left the case in the hands of the society. If the boy's father, a confectioner in Paterson, feels he can keep his son in school, that will end the matter. If not, Nachinson will be sent to an institution.

The officials of the children's society here first heard of Nachinson through a wireless message from the *Allianca,* saying that the boy had been consigned to the care of the society by the Red Cross officials at Colon. Nachinson is an alert youth, with a happy expression. His face has been tanned by the Central American sun until it is the color of coffee. To his good nature the boy was indebted for the friendly treatment he received in his travels. Here is part of his story, as he related it, after posing for his picture in the society's rooms:

"I didn't write even a postcard to my parents because I didn't want them to know where I was at first, and when I got far away I didn't always have money to pay postage or to buy a card. I had a sudden impulse to go out and see the world; that is the only reason I left home, with no money and only the clothes I wore. I did not intend to go far, so when I stole a ride on the Delaware & Lackawanna road to Scranton, I tried to get work in the mines, but nobody wanted a boy who didn't have a union man to vouch for him. Some of the freight crews were good to me and shared their food with me. They told me how to ride the 'blind baggage,' the coach next to the engine, which is not always searched for tramps. But one night they raided this car and dragged out three men. The detectives didn't see me, though, because I was so small.

"Sometimes I squeezed into the ironwork of the pilot of the locomotives. I rode from Elmira, N. Y., to Meadville, Pa., in that way. It was so cold that I nearly died while riding the cowcatcher, and had to crawl back and cling to the rods under the car. I was caught by a railroad detective in Meadville and taken before an alderman. He let me go on my promise to get out of town in ten minutes. At the first crossing of the railway tracks I came to was the same freight train that carried me to that town, so I climbed on the rods and rode out again.

"The finest man I met," continued Nachinson, "was Mayor Bill Davis, of Fort Worth, Texas, who gave me the freedom of the city. He and John Alderman, the deputy sheriff of that place, wanted to give me my carfare back home, but I bid them good-by, and said I could look out for myself."

After making his way to the Pacific coast, where reporters made up a purse for him at Los Angeles, Nachinson shipped as galley boy from San Francisco, on the steamship *Stanley Dollar*, bound for the Canal Zone. He deserted the ship and walked across country to Pedro Miguel and to Panama City, where C. W. Barber, chief of the Panama police, brought his travels to an end.

Loan Corner Stone 100 Years Old.

The New York Historical Society loaned the corner stone of the original Washington Market for the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the market. This stone was secured by the society as a historical relic when the old market was destroyed. The stone is of fine brown sandstone, standing about four feet high, and is oblong in shape.

Want No Women Wireless Operators.

Owners of the liner *Mariposa*, of San Francisco, informed Miss Mabel Kelso, wireless operator, that her position was vacant, basing their action upon an objection of the department of commerce and labor to the employment of women. An attempt will be made to find a position for her in the office of the government wireless inspector.

Prize Pumpkins Eaten by Horses.

Two horses and a small mule colt got away with a wonderfully expensive feed at the fair grounds at Dalton, Ga., recently, when they schemed their way into the agricultural building and proceeded to make a hearty meal off prize farm products.

The watchman at the grounds failed to see them enter the building and he locked them in. Taking their stand in front of the general farm exhibit of John I. Tibbs, they ate prize ears of corn and then sampled the hay and other edibles which tickled a horse's palate. As if to add insult to injury, they waded into the giant pumpkins, and it is said they topped the feed off with bottles of sorghum which looked eloquently like a more satisfying beverage.

This Woman's Hand Not Worth $1,500.

How much is a beautiful hand worth when it is a lady's?

According to Supreme Court Justice Newburgher, of New York, it is worth $1,000. According to a jury in Justice Newburgher's court, its proper valuation is $1,500, while the fair young owner of the hand in question is of the opinion that about $5,000 is its real value.

Miss Eleanor W. Sprague sued a contracting company for damages to herself and particularly her right hand, sustained when a dynamite blast was set off as she was passing the New York Central Railroad's excavation in Harlem. The hand was badly disfigured, but not crippled. She asked $5,000. The jury awarded her $1,500, but Justice Newburgher announced that he thought $1,000 enough, and would set aside the jury's finding unless Miss Sprague agreed with him.

Armored Suffragettes.

Some of the suffragettes who disturbed Mr. Lloyd-George's Welsh meeting recently came "armored," says a correspondent.

They were found to be wearing a very effective protective armor, which can be described as literally a "spiked coat of mail." This consisted of an ingeniously designed and arranged quilted padded garment armed with a quantity of sharp-pointed pins firmly fixed in the padding with their points outward.

There was nothing in the appearance of the dress of these women to betray the existence of either this formidable array of spikes or of the quilted padding. But when a steward seized or a spectator pushed a woman so protected the result can be readily conceived.

Kentucky Has Hookworm Scare.

As a result of an investigation of the hookworm disease in Pineville, Ky., it was announced that 1,750 cases had been discovered in Bell County alone. The investigation was conducted by Wickliffe Rose, executive secretary of the Rockefeller commission for the eradication of hookworm, in conjunction with an officer of the State board of health. All cases discovered are under treatment.

Toys of Blond Eskimo Shown in Museum.

The first shipment of blond "Eskimo" exhibits has been opened for public inspection at the American Museum of Natural History, New York. It consists of clothing, weapons, toys, and musical instruments of the tribe that Vilhjalmar Stefansson discovered in Coronation Gulf two years ago.

Opposes Capital Punishment.

"Capital punishment is for the poor and not for the rich," declared Acting Governor A. J. Wallace, of California, addressing the Southern California Methodist Episcopal conference. He added that he was opposed to capital punishment, even if it were right in principle because it worked out unevenly, and said he expected to reprieve several prisoners next week, although not as many as he wished to reprieve.

The reprieve of George Figueroa, wife murderer, on the eve of his execution, and the commutation of his sentence to life imprisonment by the acting governor recently, occasioned much discussion. Mr. Wallace sought to explain his action to the conference.

Crew Abandons Steamer.

The Panamaian steamer *Banes*, 848 tons, bound from Manzanillo, Cuba, for Delaware breakwater, with a cargo of coconuts, was abandoned off Cape Hatteras by Captain Perry and crew of eighteen men. They were rescued by the collier *Arethusa*, which was bound from Hampton Roads for Port Arthur, Tex., for a cargo of oil.

Supply of Black Opals Falling Off.

Australia is known for its black opals. The mines producing these gems are situated at the head of the River Darling, in northern New South Wales, about 60 miles from the village Walgett. They were discovered about nine years ago, but the output for the first few years was very small, only an occasional black stone being found. Later, with the development of the field, the output was increased enormously, a thousand or more opals being found in one field. At one time from 30,000 to 40,000 black opals were found every year, but the supply seems to be falling. Now it appears that the mines are becoming exhausted, but it is hoped that the supply will be replenished by the discovery of a new gem bearing deposit of stone. The Australian opal production is now 75 per cent less than has been known at any other time during the last 20 years. This is especially true of the black variety.

The Australian year book has this to say concerning the opal industry. "The value of opals mined last year was estimated at $300,000, of which $106,000 worth was raised in the White Cliffs district, and the balance at the Wallangulla field in the Walgett division. Beautiful specimens of black opals worth over $200 an ounce have been obtained at the last mentioned field. Since the year 1890 the total value of opals won is estiated at $6,529,377. Small quantities of precious opals are also found in the Beechworth district in Victoria. In Queensland the first recorded discovery of the gem dates from about 1875. The opaliferous district stretches over a considerable area of the western interior of the state, from Kynuna and Opalton as far down as Cunnamulla. The yield in 1909 was estimated at $10,000, and up to the end of that year at $795,673. These figures are, however, merely approximations, as large quantities of opals are disposed of privately to buyers on the fields, no record of which is obtained."

New $4,000,000 Building for the Western Union.

Complete plans for the 28-story $4,000,000 Western Union Building, to be erected at the northwest corner of Broadway and Dey Street, New York, have been filed with the building department by William Wells Bosworth, architect. They indicate an imposing structure of brick, limestone, and terra cotta, surmounted by a tower at the Broadway corner topped with a flagpole encased in a skeleton mast of steel. A similar tower will be at the southwest corner of the building toward Church Street, being about 500 feet above the street level, from which the new "time ball" will fall at noon every day. The roof of the Fulton Street extension of the building will be ornamented with a rearing horse of massive proportions, and mounted by a male rider holding a pennant on a staff. The present structure will not be torn down until the rear part of the building in Dey Street is completed.

Found Oil Well on Campus.

A 15-barrel oil well was struck on the campus of the Slippery Rock State Normal School, in Slippery Rock, Pa., recently. The trustees of the institution decided to drill for a gas well and oil was struck when the drill penetrated the Spee sand, 1,230 feet from the surface. Oil producers began leasing land in that vicinity, and several locations were made to drill wells.

One Hundred Families Make Saddles at Home in Mexico City.

The making of saddles, while in the aggregate an important local Mexican industry, is purely a home affair, the artisans for the most part working independently in their own homes. The manager of the largest wholesale and retail dealers in saddles in Mexico City said that all the saddles which they handle are made locally by hand, and that his firm alone keeps about 10 men so employed. He estimates that more than 100 families in the city are similarly employed.

Many of the hand-made saddles are handsomely carved, and most creditable in appearance, although the leather, as a rule, is far inferior to that used in American saddles. It is the practice of retailers to furnish the trees, leather, and fittings of all kinds to the workmen, and to pay them for their actual labor. The labor is the cheapest item entering into saddle construction, many entire families being satisfied with a wage of 50 cents to $1 American currency per day.

The saddle trees used for the better grade of saddle are imported from the State of Colima. No American saddles or saddle trees are carried in stock by local merchants, but are ordered from time to time, according to the specifications of the individual purchaser.

Queue Cutting in China.

Following, it is said, instructions from Peking that all queues were to be taken off within three days, the authorities of Chefu lost no time in carrying out the order.

Squads of soldiers commenced operations in the streets on the night of the eleventh, and by midnight it is said that over 2,000 individuals had been relieved of their superfluous locks. Early in the morning of the twelfth instant they were at it again, and some amusing incidents were witnessed while the cutters were in search of their quarry.

When operations were commenced on the customs jetty among the coolies working cargo, there was a general stampede. Hundreds of them rushed to the cargo boats that were alongside discharging, others to sampans and shoved off to safety, while many who were left behind, but able to swim plunged into the water. Those who were unfortunately caught submitted to the loss of their appendage with good grace, followed, however, by a choice selection of the most forcible swear words.

During the morning many of the native employees of the foreign hongs obsolutely refused to leave the premises, and considerable difficulty was experienced in getting chitbooks taken about.

The cutting off of the queue is certainly desirable from many points of view, but the manner in which it is being carried out has not only caused annoyance and inconvenience to their own countrymen, but to many foreigners as well. Two instances are reported where soldiers had the impudence to actually enter the premises of foreigners and deliberately stop the men from the work they were engaged upon while they cut off their queues.

King Who Loves Dogs Pays Fine of Owner of One.

King George, a great lover of dogs himself, has shown his sympathy with a poor woman who was fined for not having a license for her pet, and was in danger of losing it. Ultimately the amount of the license was found for her, but the Cinque Port magistrates had no power to remit the fine.

The story, however, came to the ears of King George, who gave the poor woman, Mrs. G. F. Browne, widow of an officer in the British army, a pardon, and a remission of her fine. Mrs. Browne keeps her pet, and also treasures the imposing document containing the pardon to which the sovereign's own autograph is attached.

Egg Boycott on in Cleveland.

Starting recently 40,000 people living in Cleveland and northern Ohio gave up eating eggs for three weeks. President Frank S. Krause, of the Thirty-cent-egg Club, issued the boycott on eggs. For the last two years the Thirty-cent-egg Club has fought the storage men, and each time, according to Krause, has succeeded in forcing the price down to thirty cents.

"We have about 20,000 members of the Thirty-cent-egg Club whom we can surely depend upon, and about twice that number who sympathize with the movement, and who will support it," said Krause, "and we plan to make the fight national."

Wholesale dealers say that the demand for eggs is waning. There is at present a surplus of eggs in storage here, and the wholesalers expect a reduction from the present rates.

Snake Venom for Epilepsy.

Epilepsy is one of the most intractable ailments which comes to the attention of the physician, and is usually classed with the incurable diseases. A little more than two years ago, Doctor Ralph H. Spangler, chief of the medical clinic of the Methodist Episcopal Hospital, in Philadelphia, announced in the New York *Medical Journal* the results obtained by treating eleven patients afflicted with epilepsy by means of hypodermic injections of crotalin, or rattlesnake venom. A year ago he announced in the same publication the results of the treatment in thirty-six cases.

From March, 1909, to June of this year, Doctor Spangler treated 109 epileptics with crotalin by the administration of more than 2,000 hypodermic injections. He reported on these cases at the recent meeting of the National Association for the Study of Epilepsy and the care and treatment of epileptics, at Vineland, N. J., and his report is printed in the New York *Medical Journal.*

Peffer, Only Populist Senator, is Dead at 81.

Former United States Senator William Alfred Peffer died at Topeka, Kan., recently. He was 81 years old, having been born in Cumberland County, Pa., September 10, 1831. He was the first and only Populist United States senator.

In 1853 he went to Indiana, six years later to Missouri, and thence to Illinois, where he engaged in farming. In 1862 he enlisted as a private in the Eighty-third Illinois Infantry, and was mustered out three years later with the rank of lieutenant. He began the practice of law in Clarksville, Tenn., in 1865, and later moved to Kansas. He was elected a member of the Kansas State senate in 1874, and six years later was a Republican presidential elector.

From 1891 to 1897 he was United States senator from Kansas, having been elected by the People's party. He was the Prohibition candidate for governor of Kansas in 1898, and since then had been engaged in literary work. One of his books, published in 1900, is entitled "The Rise and Fall of Populism in the United States."

Woman Falls Through Skylight on Bankers.

Directors of the Indiana Harbor National Bank, of Hammond, Ind., were in session recently, when Mary Dopa, who weighs 233 pounds, fell through the skylight and landed in a sitting position on the long table among them.

The directors scattered in a panic, thinking a bomb had been exploded.

Miss Dopa was not hurt. She had been hanging out clothes on the roof of an adjoining building and had tripped and fallen through the bank skylight.

Hero of "Republic" Dead.

As the result of exposure in remaining on the ill-fated liner *Republic* until she sank, Patrick Grant, 39, of Lynn, died at the Free Home for Consumptives, in Dorchester, Mass., recently. He was a member of the crew of the *Republic* when she collided with the *Florida,* off Martha's Vineyard, in December, 1909.

Grant was "lookout" at the time of the accident, and was one of the volunteers of the crew who remained with the captain till the ship went down. It was at this time that he caught severe cold, which developed into consumption.

He is survived by his mother, who lives in Ireland.

Sacrifices Arm to Save His Son.

George Chambers, 24 years old, of Kittery, Me., sacrificed his right arm that his two-year-old son George might live. The father recklessly risked his own life to save his son from being killed by an electric car. Although he succeeded in hurling the boy out of harm's way, the father was struck by the car and the wheels passed over his right arm close to the shoulder.

College President Will Resign and Devote Life to Peace.

David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, will resign in 1915 to work for international peace. Announcement to this effect was made on the campus recently during the celebration of the twenty-first birthday of the university. By resolution of the board of trustees, presidents of Stanford are automatically retired at the age of sixty-five. President Jordan was sixty-one last January.

Doctor Jordan has been the first and only president of Stanford.

"Baby Silencer" Invention of a Western Mother.

Maxim and his gun silencer has nothing on Mrs. Esther Prouty, of Fort Wayne, Ind., and her baby muffler.

Mrs. Prouty entered the Hotel Baltimore lobby, in Kansas City, recently, and placed her two-year-old baby on a settee while she registered. The baby squirmed and kicked, and made faces, but there was no noise.

"Poor thing," some one said, "it is deaf and dumb."

The mother smiled, and said: "No, he is crying his best, but he is wearing his shock and noise absorber. If I would remove it he would fill the lobby with more noise than you ever heard."

A crowd gathered and Mrs. Prouty assumed the rôle of lecturer with illustrations.

A thin rubber hood fitted over the baby's chin and mouth; of the same color of the baby's skin, it could not be seen at a distance. Around the mouth was a pocket in which was a filmy cloth resembling mosquito bar, of silk. Mrs. Prouty changes this padding every day and the baby wears it only when in public. The child can breathe through it and it is removed when the baby wants a drink. The absorber is fastened in the back under the baby's hood, and cry as much as it wishes, the noise sounds no louder than a dull buzz.

Mrs. Prouty will not patent her device. She wants every mother to have the advantage of it.

Monkeys Given Measles by Scientists.

Doctor John F. Anderson and Doctor Joseph Goldberg, of the public health service, at Washington, have succeeded in inoculating monkeys with measles, something said to be unknown hitherto, and have made discoveries which promise to make the malady less general. The germ was so minute that it passed through the pores of a porcelain filter. The inability of scientists to inoculate lower animals with measles has retarded discovery of an antitoxin. The investigators made known the result of their work in the fifteenth congress of hygiene and demography in Washington.

Locomotives Used as Fire Fighters.

Steam locomotives as fire fighters have proved so efficacious on the Pennsylvania Railroad that the company have equipped 612 engines with special fire-fighting apparatus of pumps and hose. It is attached to locomotives regularly used in switching cars. The crews are to be systematically trained as fire fighters.

The yards are divided in districts, numbered as are fire-alarm boxes in cities. When a fire is discovered alarm whistles are blown and engine drivers can tell just where the fire is.

Father of McKinley's Assassinator Thrashes Man Who Taunts Him.

Paul Czolgosz, father of Leon Czolgosz, who assassinated President McKinley, was complimented by Municipal Judge Levine, in Cleveland, for having thrashed Synatz Russinslsi, who taunted Czolgosz for his son's act.

Czolgosz was in court on an assault and battery charge preferred by Russinslsi. After declaring the father of the assassin not guilty, Judge Levine said:

"Czolgosz was taunted by Russinslsi and five companions about his son's rash act. In this case the father is not responsible for his son's sins. Czolgosz should have whipped the whole bunch."

Russian Privileges Continue to 1921.

The commercial and other privileges acquired by Russia from China in 1881 in the territory occupied by Russian troops on the borders of Russian and Chinese Turkestan, are to remain in force until 1921.

The Russian minister at Peking informed the Chinese government that owing to China's failure to coöperate in a revision of the treaty, Russia is compelled to consider the privileges in the tea trade and the free exchange of commodities in the frontier zone as valid for another ten years.

Article XV. of the treaty provides that it can be revised every ten years if notice be given six months before the expiration of that term.

His 3,500-mile Vacation Cost $15.

James J. Reid, of San Diego, Cal., formerly of Portland, Ore., has just made a remarkable journey.

He covered the distance from Portland to San Diego on a motor cycle and made so many side trips en route that his journey aggregated 3,500 miles.

Another interesting feature of his journey was the very small cost of his fuel. His total gasoline bill for the entire month consumed in his travels was only $15. This is remarkable in view of the fact that he rode up the steepest mountain grades on his motor cycle, riding for nine miles straight up the mountain as he approached the famous Pocheco pass, the scene of the capture of many a horse thief and bandit in days past.

Mr. Reid's auto cycle resembles a motor cycle in general outline, but is equipped with a large and comfortable seat and with foot rests and a place for baggage. The machine was practically new when he began the journey and was in perfect condition when he finished his 3,500-mile ride.

Reid encountered no difficulties en route except such as his own ingenuity could overcome.

"I frightened a wolf and amused a parrot," he laughed, "and I must admit the machine attracted a crowd in every city through which I passed."

Sanitary Inspection of All Trains and Vessels Will be Made by Uncle Sam.

Sanitary inspection of all trains and vessels in interstate traffic is to be begun immediately by the public health service.

All commissioned medical officers of the service, when traveling under official orders, will inspect the sanitary conditions of the conveyances on which they travel, and of the stations, terminals, and wharves at which they stop.

The officers will report to headquarters at Washington the names of railroad and steamship companies on which bad conditions are found, and full details of the conditions.

"It is contemplated," the treasury department announces, "that the reports will be published."

Among the first to be considered will be emigrant trains. Violations on first-class trains, absence of sanitary precautions on cars, fumigation, and a host of other details affecting the health of travelers will be considered.

When Told Brother is Thief, Eminent Russian Dies.

A report from St. Petersburg says that M. Yasiuninsky, a well-known Moscow millionaire and member of the upper house of the Russian Parliament, died suddenly in St. Petersburg on learning that his brother had disappeared with $350,000 of his firm's money.

Announcrs Remedy for Angina Pectoris.

Much importance is attached in medical circles to a communication read at the Academy of Medicine, in Paris, by Doctor Fiessinger that angina pectoris is by no means incurable, as had hitherto been supposed.

Doctor Fiessinger, who has carefully studied over 80 cases of this disease, described a treatment which he found very successful, and which consisted of mercury or potassium iodine, dignitaline, and theobromine, taken in very small doses, with long rests in bed, and an extremely spare diet.

Boy Scouts Hope to Blaze Way for Greater England.

Boy scouts, according to Sir Robert Baden-Powell, are being trained to put England's backbone to its proper use. Because of too much civilization, Englishmen are rapidly becoming a nation of lookers-on, instead of taking their share in enterprise, where of old they led the way. Where they formerly were the discoverers and inventors of Northwest passages or steam engines and telegraphs, and the exploiters of athletic development, they are leaving to foreigners such things as discovering the north pole, inventing motor cars and aëroplanes, and winning boat races and polo matches.

Thus, scouting for boys is the imitation of the ways and work of frontiersmen on the outposts of the empire. To carry out their lives these men must be resourceful, self-reliant, and enduring, loyal and dependable, and energetic in doing what they know to be their duty. These Sir Robert holds up to the boys as examples to follow. Practice of the elements of the backwoodsman's life—or of seamanship—appeal to all boys, and so they become willing pupils in scoutcraft, and its codes and ideals easily are impressed upon them. This training tends practically to supply the character and development which are so much wanted in the present system of education in the schools, where book work is predominant.

"Our whole aim," says the chief scout, "by putting character into the lads, is to shape them into good and valuable citizens for the nation. Our scouting has nothing to do with soldiering; it is merely the practice of backwoodsmanship. His manliness and sense of patriotism would no doubt cause every scout to prepare himself to take his share in the defense of his country, should this ever be necessary, and incidentally the practice he gets in camp life, scoutcraft, signaling, dispatch riding, affords the soundest foundation on which to model a soldier of the best quality. But we do not preach war and bloodshed to the lads, nor do we favor military drill for them."

"Climbing Fish" Shown.

The aquarium society of the American Museum of Natural History had its third annual exhibition October 6-14, in the museum at Seventy-seventh Street and Central Park West, New York.

A miniature lake was laid out in one of the rooms in the main building, and there, in surroundings as nearly natural as possible, forms of piscatorial life from every part of the globe were shown.

Varieties of the "nest building" fish, the "fighting fish," of India, and the "climbing perch," from East India, were among the varieties shown at the exhibit.

197 Aviation Fatalities in Four Years.

The aviation week at Johannisthal, Germany, ended recently, and after two more deaths were added to the long list of fatalities that have occurred among European aviators.

A monoplane, driven by Ernst Alig and carrying a mechanician, suddenly fell from a height of 600 feet when a wing collapsed. The mechanician was thrown from the machine at a height of 450 feet. His body alighted clear of the wreckage. Alig fell with the monoplane and was killed instantly.

The accident was witnessed by a large crowd. Alig qualified as an aviator last May.

The death of Ernst Alig and his mechanician at Johannisthal, and M. Kondo, the Japanese, at Corning, N. Y., recently, bring the long list of aviation fatalities for the four years of flying up to 197. Each year has seen an increase in the number of fatalities. In 1908, 1 man was killed; in 1909, 4; in 1910, 36; in 1911, 73, while in the present year 83 have perished so far.

Conscience-stricken After Twenty-five Years.

Conscience-stricken after 25 years, some one returned to Robert E. L. Howe, deputy tax commissioner, of New York, a pair of gold opera glasses inlaid with pearl and valued at $200.

The glasses were left on a ferryboat of the South Ferry line one night when Mr. Howe and his fiancée were on their way from Brooklyn to a theater in Manhattan. He advertised for them and offered a reward without avail. The glasses were delivered to his wife at their summer home in White Plains. The package had been mailed at a Brooklyn substation.

Mr. Howe said the glasses were his last gift to his fiancée before their marriage. He says he is willing to make good his offer of a reward if the person who sent back the glasses will communicate with him.

Woman is Set on Fire by Sun's Rays.

Mrs. Minnie Bulkinkle, who is employed as janitress at a Presbyterian church in New York, was severely burned when her dress was set on fire by the rays of the sun shining on a glass lamp reflector which she held in her hand.

Frank Menandez, who was sitting on the porch of his home, directly across the street, said that he noticed Mrs. Bulkinkle standing on the sidewalk in front of the church.

She had been there for at least five minutes, Menandez said, when he was attracted by her screams. Looking up he saw that her dress was in flames.

Menandez ran across the street and began to tear her clothes from her. Patrolman Charles Hay ran to her, and before the two men succeeded in putting out the flames Mrs. Bulkinkle was badly burned.

Was Down on Lawyers.

Ezra C. Bartlett, a retired mine owner, who dropped dead in the gymnasium at the New York Athletic Club August 29, expressed his opinion of the legal profession in his will filed by his sister, Miss Annie Cora Bartlett, of Jerome, Ariz.

The will contained this clause, addressed to his sister as executrix.

"I hereby particularly warn you against probate judges and attorneys-at-law, and sincerely trust you will not have occasion to consult or employ the latter in regard to this instrument. My personal experience in dealings, social and otherwise, with lawyers has been expensive, and careful observance in other instances has convinced me that they are all dangerous crooks, only disguised and expressly educated and trained to rob one's confidence in order that they may defraud and rob with impunity."

Mr. Bartlett left an estate of $50,000.

By Motor Boat to Russia.

Among the passengers arriving at New York, recently, on the American liner *New York* from Southampton was Captain Thomas Fleming Day, editor of *The Rudder,* who piloted the motor boat *Detroit* on her trip from New Rochelle to St. Petersburg last summer. He was accompanied by Charles E. Earle, the mate, and W. H. Moreton, the engineer.

Captain Day said the *Detroit* departed from New Rochelle on July 16 and arrived at Queenstown on August 7, and from there sailed to Southampton. From that port the *Detroit* went to Ostend, Amsterdam, and through the Kiel Canal to St. Petersburg, where she arrived on September 12.

"We stayed there seven days," said Captain Day, "and then went to London, leaving the *Detroit* at the Russian capital. This long trip was undertaken," he went on to say, "to study out navigation problems connected with the motor boat. I shall write a full report from the notes I have taken on the voyage."

"Gloved Oath" is Barred by Court.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Healey, of the Sixty-ninth Regiment, shocked the members of the court-martial which is trying Captain William B. Stacom, of Company B, by attempting to take the oath as a witness without removing the glove worn on his right hand. Looks of the dagger sort hurled at the colonel by the court and spectators were without avail, and finally Lieutenant Colonel James H. Wells, presiding, in sarcasm tones, had to order the removal of the offending hand covering.

Olympic Games Big Financial Failure.

The Olympic games were a great financial failure, not less than $243,000 having been lost by the organizers, according to the final auditing of the accounts.

From the standpoint of good sport the games were acknowledged to have been well conducted. Good order and system were characteristic of the program from day to day. But this good management meant heavy cost, and the promoters of the affair find themselves facing this great deficit. The amount does not include the cost of the stadium.

The whole income from the stadium, including season tickets, was slightly more than $270,000. On the day of the Marathon $22,788 was taken in at the gates and adding to this the season tickets for that day the income was $34,128, which is the largest sum ever taken in Sweden for a public affair.

Sweden is not disheartened by the deficit, as it was expected from the start, and the country feels well repaid in having shown the world the high degree of her sportsmanship and management. She was successful in both of these endeavors and it is considered certain that the Swedish government, recognizing these facts, will not hesitate to place at the disposal of the committee the funds necessary to pay all of its debts.

Farmer Loans Horses to Unfortunate Neighbors.

"Notice—The Lord has spared my stock. My horses have gone through the epidemic without loss, and I have 20 head to loan to my less fortunate neighbors, without charge, for plowing. Those who need are welcome to them. PETER SCHOFIELD."

This notice, posted at the country school and store at Losser, Hodgman County, Kan., is typical of the coöperation between farmers following the passing of the horse plague, the worst disaster that has befallen central and western Kansas since the grass hopper invasion of the 70's.

The free lending of horses and free transportation of traction engines to pull plows is making it possible for many farmers who lost their horses to put in their crops.

Gyroscope is Being Tested by Navy.

Great secrecy is being maintained at the Brooklyn Navy Yard regarding a series of gyroscope tests which have been going on there for several months aboard the destroyer *Worden.* It is said that naval officials hope the experiments will solve the problem of preventing the rolling of a war vessel while under way, or in a heavy sea.

The success of the experiment, it is asserted, will mean a considerable increase in the speed and usefulness of the smaller naval craft under battle conditions.

The gyroscopes, two in number, are placed on the main deck forward, one on the port side and the other on the starboard. They are about four feet in diameter. The type is the invention of a naval officer, and is said to be far more active, and therefore superior in effect to the so-called "passive" gyroscopes used with great success by the Germans.

A torpedo-boat destroyer like the *Worden* has an angle stability of 90 degrees. In the great storm last Christmas, in which a fleet of torpedo boats was tossed about and badly damaged on the way to Cuba, one of the boats is said to have rolled 110 degrees. She dipped water with her smokestacks.

The *Worden* is 248 feet long, 23 feet 10 inches wide, and has a speed of 29.88 knots.

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We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news-dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage-stamps.

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